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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Portrait of John Stuart Mill	*Frontispiece*
Portrait of Musaeus	199
Portrait of Bulwer	206
Portrait of Voltaire	311
Portrait of Washington	314

EUREKA:

AN ESSAY ON THE MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE.

[To the few who love me and whom I love—to those who feel rather than to those who think—to the dreamers and those who put faith in dreams as in the only realities—I offer this book of Truths, not in its character of Truth-Teller, but for the Beauty that abounds in its Truth; constituting it true. To these I present the composition as an Art Product alone:—let us say as a Romance; or, if I be not urging too lofty a claim, as a Poem.

What I here propound is true:—therefore it cannot die; or if by any means it be now trodden down so that it die, it will "rise again to the Life Everlasting."

Nevertheless it is as a Poem only that I wish this work to be judged after I am dead.]

IT is with humility really unassumed—it is with a sentiment even of awe—that I pen the opening sentence of this work: for of all conceivable subjects I approach the reader with the most solemn—the most comprehensive—the most difficult—the most august.

What terms shall I find sufficiently simple in their sublimity—sufficiently sublime in their simplicity—for the mere enunciation of my theme?

I design to speak of the *Physical, Metaphysical, and*

Mathematical—of the Material and Spiritual Universe—of its Essence, its Origin, its Creation, its Present Condition, and its Destiny. I shall be so rash, moreover, as to challenge the conclusions, and thus, in effect, to question the sagacity, of many of the greatest and most justly reverenced of men.

In the beginning, let me as distinctly as possible announce—not the theorem which I hope to demonstrate—for, whatever the mathematicians may assert, there is, in this world at least, *no such thing* as demonstration—but the ruling idea which, throughout this volume, I shall be continually endeavoring to suggest.

My general proposition, then, is this:—*In the Original Unity of the First Thing lies the Secondary Cause of All Things, with the Germ of their Inevitable Annihilation.*

In illustration of this idea, I propose to take such a survey of the Universe that the mind may be able really to receive and to perceive an individual impression.

He who from the top of Ætna casts his eyes leisurely around, is affected chiefly by the *extent* and *diversity* of the scene. Only by a rapid whirling on his heel could he hope to comprehend the panorama in the sublimity of its *oneness*. But as, on the summit of Ætna, *no* man has thought of whirling on his heel, so no man has ever taken into his brain the full uniqueness of the prospect; and so, again, whatever considerations lie involved in this uniqueness, have as yet no practical existence for mankind.

I do not know a treatise in which a survey of the *Uni-*

verse—using the word in its most comprehensive and only legitimate acceptation—is taken at all:—and it may be as well here to mention that by the term "Universe," wherever employed without qualification in this essay, I mean to designate *the utmost conceivable expanse of space, with all things, spiritual and material, that can be imagined to exist within the compass of that expanse.* In speaking of what is *ordinarily* implied by the expression, "Universe," I shall take a phrase of limitation—"the Universe of stars." Why this distinction is considered necessary will be seen in the sequel.

But even of treatises on the really limited, although always assumed as the *un*limited, Universe of *stars*, I know none in which a survey, even of this limited Universe, is so taken as to warrant deductions from its *individuality*. The nearest approach to such a work is made in the "Cosmos" of Alexander Von Humboldt. He presents the subject, however, *not* in its individuality but in its generality. His theme, in its last result, is the law of *each* portion of the merely physical Universe, as this law is related to the laws of *every other* portion of this merely physical Universe. His design is simply syncœretical. In a word, he discusses the universality of material relation, and discloses to the eye of Philosophy whatever inferences have hitherto lain hidden *behind* this universality. But however admirable be the succinctness with which he has treated each particular point of his topic, the mere multiplicity of these points occasions, necessarily, an amount of detail, and

thus an involution of idea, which preclude all *individuality* of impression.

It seems to me that, in aiming at this latter effect, and, through it, at the consequences—the conclusions—the suggestions—the speculations—or, if nothing better offer itself, the mere guesses which may result from it—we require something like a mental gyration on the heel. We need so rapid a revolution of all things about the central point of sight that, while the minutiæ vanish altogether, even the more conspicuous objects become blended into one. Among the vanishing minutiæ, in a survey of this kind, would be all exclusively terrestrial matters. The Earth would be considered in its planetary relations alone. A man, in this view, becomes mankind; mankind a member of the cosmical family of Intelligences.

And now, before proceeding to our subject proper, let me beg the reader's attention to an extract or two from a somewhat remarkable letter, which appears to have been found corked in a bottle and floating on the *Mare Tenebrarum*—an ocean well described by the Nubian geographer, Ptolemy Hephestion, but little frequented in modern days unless by the Transcendentalists and some other divers for crotchets. The date of this letter, I confess, surprises me even more particularly than its contents; for it seems to have been written in the year *two* thousand eight hundred and forty-eight. As for the passages I am about to transcribe, they, I fancy, will speak for themselves.

"Do you know, my dear friend," says the writer, addressing, no doubt, a contemporary—"Do you know that it is scarcely more than eight or nine hundred years ago since the metaphysicians first consented to relieve the people of the singular fancy that there exist *but two practicable roads to Truth?* Believe it if you can. It appears, however, that long, long ago, in the night of Time, there lived a Turkish philosopher called Aries and surnamed Tottle." [Here, possibly, the letter-writer means Aristotle; the best names are wretchedly corrupted in two or three thousand years.] "The fame of this great man depended mainly upon his demonstration that sneezing is a natural provision, by means of which over-profound thinkers are enabled to expel superfluous ideas through the nose; but he obtained a scarcely less valuable celebrity as the founder, or at all events as the principal propagator, of what was termed the *de*ductive or *a priori* philosophy. He started with what he maintained to be axioms, or self-evident truths; and the now well-understood fact that *no* truths are *self*-evident, really does not make in the slightest degree against his speculations:—it was sufficient for his purpose that the truths in question were evident at all. From axioms he proceeded, logically, to results. His most illustrious disciples were one Tuclid, a geometrician," [meaning Euclid,] "and one Kant, a Dutchman, the originator of that species of Transcendentalism which, with the change merely of a C for a K, now bears his peculiar name.

"Well, Aries Tottle flourished supreme, until the advent of one Hog, surnamed 'the Ettrick shepherd,' who preached an entirely different system, which he called the *a posteriori* or *in*ductive. His plan referred altogether to sensation. He proceeded by observing, analyzing, and classifying facts—*instantiæ Naturæ*, as they were somewhat affectedly called—and arranging them into general laws. In a word, while the mode of Aries rested on *noumena*, that of Hog depended on *phenomena;* and so great was the admiration excited by this latter system that, at its first introduction, Aries fell into general disrepute. Finally, however, he recovered ground, and was permitted to divide the empire of Philosophy with his more modern rival,—the savans contenting themselves with proscribing all *other* competitors, past, present and to come; putting an end to all controversy on the topic by the promulgation of a Median law, to the effect that the Aristotelian and Baconian roads are, and of right ought to be, the sole possible avenues to knowledge:—'Baconian,' you must know, my dear friend," adds the letter-writer at this point, "was an adjective invented as equivalent to Hog-ian, and at the same time more dignified and euphonious.

"Now I do assure you most positively"—proceeds the epistle—"that I represent these matters fairly; and you can easily understand how restrictions so absurd on their very face must have operated, in those days, to retard the progress of true Science, which makes its most important

advances—as all history will show—by seemingly intuitive *leaps*. These ancient ideas confined investigation to crawling; and I need not suggest to you that crawling, among varieties of locomotion, is a very capital thing of its kind;—but because the tortoise is sure of foot, for this reason must we clip the wings of the eagles? For many centuries, so great was the infatuation, about Hog especially, that a virtual stop was put to all thinking, properly so called. No man dared utter a truth for which he felt himself indebted to his soul alone. It mattered not whether the truth was even demonstrably such; for the dogmatizing philosophers of that epoch regarded only *the road* by which it professed to have been attained. The end, with them, was a point of no moment, whatever:—'the means!' they vociferated—'let us look at the means!'—and if, on scrutiny of the means, it was found neither to come under the category Hog, nor under the category Aries (which means ram), why then the savans went no farther, but, calling the thinker a fool and branding him a 'theorist,' would never, thenceforward, have any thing to do either with *him* or with his truths.

"Now, my dear friend," continues the letter-writer, "it cannot be maintained that by the crawling system exclusively adopted, men would arrive at the maximum amount of truth, even in any long series of ages; for the repression of imagination was an evil not to be counterbalanced even by *absolute* certainty in the snail processes. But their certainty was very far from absolute. The er-

ror of our progenitors was quite analogous with that of the wiseacre who fancies he must necessarily see an object the more distinctly, the more closely he holds it to his eyes. They blinded themselves, too, with the impalpable, titillating Scotch snuff of *detail;* and thus the boasted facts of the Hog-ites were by no means always facts—a point of little importance but for the assumption that they always *were.* The vital taint, however, in Baconianism—its most lamentable fount of error—lay in its tendency to throw power and consideration into the hands of merely perceptive men—of those inter-Tritonic minnows, the microscopical savans—the diggers and pedlers of minute *facts,* for the most part in physical science,—facts, all of which they retailed at the same price upon the highway; their value depending, it was supposed, simply upon the *fact of their fact,* without reference to their applicability or inapplicability in the development of those ultimate and only legitimate facts, called Law.

"Than the persons"—the letter goes on to say—"than the persons thus suddenly elevated by the Hog-ian philosophy into a station for which they were unfitted—thus transferred from the sculleries into the parlors of Science—from its pantries into its pulpits,—than these individuals a more intolerant, a more intolerable, set of bigots and tyrants never existed on the face of the earth. Their creed, their text, and their sermon were, alike, the one word '*fact*'—but, for the most part, even of this one word, they knew not even the meaning. On those who

ventured to *disturb* their facts with the view of putting them in order and to use, the disciples of Hog had no mercy whatever. All attempts at generalization were met at once by the words 'theoretical,' 'theory,' 'theorist,' —all *thought*, to be brief, was very properly resented as a personal affront to themselves. Cultivating the natural sciences to the exclusion of Metaphysics, the Mathematics, and Logic, many of these Bacon-engendered philosophers —one-idea-ed, one-sided, and lame of a leg—were more wretchedly helpless—more miserably ignorant, in view of all the comprehensible objects of knowledge, than the veriest unlettered hind who proves that he knows something at least, in admitting that he knows absolutely nothing.

"Nor had our forefathers any better right to talk about *certainty*, when pursuing, in blind confidence, the *a priori* path of axioms, or of the Ram. At innumerable points this path was scarcely as straight as a ram's horn. The simple truth is, that the Aristotelians erected their castles upon a basis far less reliable than air; *for no such things as axioms ever existed or can possibly exist at all.* This they must have been very blind indeed not to see, or at least not to suspect; for, even in their own day, many of their long-admitted 'axioms' had been abandoned: '*ex nihilo nihil fit*,' for example, and a 'thing cannot act where it is not,' and 'there cannot be antipodes,' and 'darkness cannot proceed from light.' These and numerous similar propositions formerly accepted, without hesi-

tation, as axioms, or undeniable truths, were, even at the period of which I speak, seen to be altogether untenable: —how absurd in these people, then, to persist in relying upon a basis, as immutable, whose mutability had become so repeatedly manifest!

"But, even through evidence afforded by themselves against themselves, it is easy to convict these *a priori* reasoners of the grossest unreason,—it is easy to show the futility, the impalpability, of their axioms in general. I have now lying before me"—it will be observed that we still proceed with the letter—"I have now lying before me a book printed about a thousand years ago. Pundit assures me that it is decidedly the cleverest ancient work on its topic, which is 'Logic.' The author, who was much esteemed in his day, was one Miller, or Mill; and we find it recorded of him, as a point of some importance, that he rode a mill-horse whom he called Jeremy Bentham:—but let us glance at the volume itself.

"Ah!—'Ability or inability to conceive,' says Mr. Mill, very properly, 'is *in no case* to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth.' Now, that this is a palpable truism, no one in his senses will deny. *Not* to admit the proposition, is to insinuate a charge of variability in Truth itself, whose every title is a synonym of the Steadfast. If ability to conceive be taken as a criterion of Truth, then a truth to *David* Hume would very seldom be a truth to *Joe;* and ninety-nine hundredths of what is undeniable in Heaven, would be demonstrable falsity upon Earth. The

proposition of Mr. Mill, then, is sustained. I will not grant it to be an *axiom;* and this merely because I am showing that *no* axioms exist; but, with a distinction which could not have been cavilled at even by Mr. Mill himself, I am ready to grant that, *if* an axiom *there be*, then the proposition of which we speak has the fullest right to be considered an axiom—that no *more* absolute axiom *is*—and, consequently, that any subsequent proposition which shall conflict with this one primarily advanced, must be either a falsity in itself—that is to say, no axiom—or, if admitted axiomatic, must at once neutralize both itself and its predecessor.

"And now, by the logic of their own propounder, let us proceed to test any one of the axioms propounded. Let us give Mr. Mill the fairest of play. We will bring the point to no ordinary issue. We will select for investigation no common-place axiom—no axiom of what, not the less preposterously because only impliedly, he terms his secondary class—as if a positive truth by definition could be either more or less positively a truth; we will select, I say, no axiom of an unquestionability so questionable as is to be found in Euclid. We will not talk, for example, about such propositions as that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, or that the whole is greater than any one of its parts. We will afford the logician *every* advantage. We will come at once to a proposition which he regards as the acme of the unquestionable—as the quintessence of axiomatic undeniability. Here it is:

—'Contradictions cannot *both* be true—that is, cannot co-exist in nature.' Here Mr. Mill means, for instance,—and I give the most forcible instance conceivable,—that a tree must be either a tree or *not* a tree—that it cannot be at the same time a tree *and* not a tree: all which is quite reasonable of itself, and will answer remarkably well as an axiom, until we bring it into collation with an axiom insisted upon a few pages before; in other words—words which I have previously employed,—until we test it by the logic of its own propounder. 'A tree,' Mr. Mill asserts, 'must be either a tree or *not* a tree.' Very well: and now let me ask him, *Why*? To this little query there is but one response—I defy any man living to invent a second. The sole answer is this:—'Because we find it *impossible to conceive* that a tree can be any thing else than a tree or not a tree.' This, I repeat, is Mr. Mill's sole answer—he will not *pretend* to suggest another; and yet, by his own showing, his answer is clearly no answer at all—for has he not already required us to admit, *as an axiom*, that ability or inability to conceive, is *in no case* to be taken as a criterion of axiomatic truth? Thus all—absolutely *all* his argumentation is at sea without a rudder. Let it not be urged that an exception from the general rule is to be made in cases where the 'impossibility to conceive' is so peculiarly great, as when we are called upon to conceive a tree *both* a tree and *not* a tree. Let no attempt, I say, be made at urging this sotticism: for, in the first place, there are no *degrees* of 'impossi-

bility,' and thus no one impossible conception can be *more* peculiarly impossible than another impossible conception; in the second place, Mr. Mill himself—no doubt after thorough deliberation—has most distinctly, and most rationally, excluded all opportunity for exception, by the emphasis of his proposition, that, *in no case*, is ability or inability to conceive, to be taken as a criterion of axiomatic truth; in the third place, even were exceptions admissible at all, it remains to be shown how any exception is admissible *here*. That a tree can be both a tree and not a tree, is an idea which the angels, or the devils, *may* entertain, and which no doubt many an earthly Bedlamite, or Transcendentalist, *does*.

"Now I do not quarrel with these ancients," continues the letter-writer, "*so much* on account of the transparent frivolity of their logic, which, to be plain, was baseless, worthless, and fantastic altogether, as on account of their pompous and infatuate proscription of all *other* roads to Truth than the two narrow and crooked paths—the one of creeping and the other of crawling—to which, in their ignorant perversity, they have dared to confine the Soul—the Soul which loves nothing so well as to soar in those regions of illimitable intuition which are utterly incognizant of '*path*.'

"By the by, my dear friend, is it not an evidence of the mental slavery entailed upon those bigoted people by their Hogs and their Rams, that in spite of the eternal prating of their savans about *roads* to Truth, none of

them fell, even by accident, into what we now so distinctly perceive to be the broadest, the straightest, and most available of all mere roads—the great thoroughfare —the majestic highway of the *Consistent?* Is it not wonderful that they should have failed to deduce from the works of God the vitally momentous consideration that *a perfect consistency can be nothing but an absolute truth?* How plain—how rapid our progress since the late announcement of this proposition! By its means investigation has been taken out of the hands of the ground-moles, and given as a duty, rather than as a task, to the true—to the *only* true thinkers—to the generally educated men of ardent imagination. These latter—our Keplers, our Laplaces—'speculate,' 'theorize,'—these are the terms. Can you not fancy the shout of scorn with which they would be received by our progenitors, were it possible for them to be looking over my shoulders as I write? The Keplers, I repeat, speculate, theorize, and their theories are merely corrected, reduced, sifted, cleared, little by little, of their chaff of inconsistency, until at length there stands apparent and unencumbered *Consistency*—a consistency which the most stolid admit, because it *is* a consistency, to be an absolute and unquestionable *Truth.*

"I have often thought, my friend, that it must have puzzled these dogmaticians of a thousand years ago, to determine, even, by which of their two boasted roads it is that the cryptographist attains the solution of the more

complicated cyphers; or by which of them Champollion guided mankind to those important and innumerable truths which, for so many centuries, have lain entombed amid the phonetical hieroglyphics of Egypt. In especial, would it not have given these bigots some trouble to determine by which of their two roads was reached the most momentous and sublime of *all* their truths—the truth, the fact, of *gravitation?* Newton deduced it from the laws of Kepler. Kepler admitted that these laws he *guessed*—these laws whose investigation disclosed to the greatest of British astronomers that principle, the basis of all (existing) physical principle, in going behind which we enter at once the nebulous kingdom of Metaphysics. Yes!—these vital laws Kepler *guessed*—that is to say, he *imagined* them. Had he been asked to point out either the *de*ductive or *in*ductive route by which he attained them, his reply might have been: 'I know nothing about *routes*,—but I *do* know the machinery of the universe. Here it is. I grasped it with *my soul*—I reached it by mere dint of *intuition*.' Alas, poor ignorant old man! Could not any metaphysician have told him that what he called 'intuition' was but the conviction resulting from *de*ductions and *in*ductions, of which the processes were so shadowy as to have escaped his consciousness, eluded his reason, or bidden defiance to his capacity of expression? How great a pity it is that some 'moral philosopher' had not enlightened him about all this! How it would have comforted him on his death-bed to know that, instead of

having gone intuitively and thus unbecomingly, he had, in fact, proceeded decorously and legitimately—that is to say, Hog-ishly, or at least Ram-ishly—into the vast halls where lay gleaming, untended, and hitherto untouched by mortal hand, unseen by mortal eye, the imperishable and priceless secrets of the Universe!

"Yes, Kepler was essentially a *theorist;* but this title, *now* of so much sanctity, was, in those ancient days, a designation of supreme contempt. It is only *now* that men begin to appreciate that divine old man—to sympathize with the prophetical and poetical rhapsody of his ever memorable words. For *my* part," continues the unknown correspondent, "I glow with a sacred fire when I even think of them, and I feel that I shall never grow weary of their repetition. In concluding this letter, let me have the real pleasure of transcribing them once again:—'*I care not whether my work be read now or by posterity. I can afford to wait a century for readers when God himself has waited six thousand years for an observer. I triumph. I have stolen the golden secret of the Egyptians. I will indulge my sacred fury.*'"

Here end my quotations from this very unaccountable and, perhaps, somewhat impertinent epistle; and perhaps it would be folly to comment, in any respect, upon the chimerical, not to say revolutionary, fancies of the writer —whoever he is,—fancies so radically at war with the well-considered and well-settled opinions of this age. Let us proceed, then, to our legitimate thesis, *The Universe.*

This thesis admits a choice between two modes of discussion:—We may *as*cend or *de*scend. Beginning at our own point of view, at the earth on which we stand, we may pass to the other planets of our system, thence to the Sun, thence to our system considered collectively, and thence, through other systems, indefinitely outward; or, commencing on high at some point as definite as we can make it or conceive it, we may come down to the habitation of man. Usually, that is to say, in ordinary essays on Astronomy, the first of these two modes is, with certain reservation, adopted; this for the obvious reason that astronomical *facts*, merely, and principles, being the object, that object is best fulfilled in stepping from the known because proximate, gradually onward to the point where all certitude becomes lost in the remote. For my present purpose, however, that of enabling the mind to take in, as if from afar and at one glance, a distant conception of the *individual* Universe, it is clear that a descent to small from great—to the outskirts from the centre (if we could establish a centre)—to the end from the beginning (if we could fancy a beginning), would be the preferable course, but for the difficulty, if not impossibility, of presenting, in this course, to the unastronomical, a picture at all comprehensible in regard to such considerations as are involved in *quantity*—that is to say, in number, magnitude, and distance.

Now, distinctness,—intelligibility, at all points, is a primary feature in my general design. On important topics it

is better to be a good deal prolix than even a very little obscure. But abstruseness is a quality appertaining to no subject *per se*. All are alike, in facility of comprehension, to him who approaches them by properly graduated steps. It is merely because a stepping-stone, here and there, is heedlessly left unsupplied in our road to Differential Calculus, that this latter is not altogether as simple a thing as a sonnet by Mr. Solomon Seesaw.

By way of admitting, then, no *chance* for misapprehension, I think it advisable to proceed as if even the more obvious facts of Astronomy were unknown to the reader. In combining the two modes of discussion to which I have referred, I propose to avail myself of the advantages peculiar to each,—and very especially of the *iteration in detail* which will be unavoidable as a consequence of the plan. Commencing with a descent, I shall reserve for the return upward those indispensable considerations of *quantity* to which allusion has already been made.

Let us begin, then, at once, with that merest of words, "Infinity." This, like "God," "spirit," and some other expressions of which the equivalents exist in all languages, is by no means the expression of an idea, but of an effort at one. It stands for the possible attempt at an impossible conception. Man needed a term by which to point out the *direction* of this effort—the cloud behind which lay, forever invisible, the *object* of this attempt. A word, in fine, was demanded, by means of which one human being might put himself in relation at once with another

human being and with a certain *tendency* of the human intellect. Out of this demand arose the word, "Infinity"; which is thus the representative but of the *thought of a thought*.

As regards *that* infinity now considered—the infinity of space—we often hear it said that "its idea is admitted by the mind, is acquiesced in, is entertained, on account of the greater difficulty which attends the conception of a limit." But this is merely one of those *phrases* by which even profound thinkers, time out of mind, have occasionally taken pleasure in deceiving *themselves*. The quibble lies concealed in the word "difficulty." "The mind," we are told, "entertains the idea of *limitless*, through the greater *difficulty* which it finds in entertaining that of *limited*, space." Now, were the proposition but fairly *put*, its absurdity would become transparent at once. Clearly, there is no more *difficulty* in the case. The assertion intended, if presented *according* to its intention, and without sophistry, would run thus:—"The mind admits the idea of limitless, through the greater *impossibility* of entertaining that of limited, space."

It must be immediately seen that this is not a question of two statements between whose respective credibilities —or of two arguments between whose respective validities —the *reason* is called upon to decide; it is a matter of two conceptions, directly conflicting, and each avowedly impossible, one of which the *intellect* is supposed to be capable of entertaining, on account of the greater *impos-*

sibility of entertaining the other. The choice is *not* made between two difficulties; it is merely *fancied* to be made between two impossibilities. Now of the former, there *are* degrees; but of the latter, none:—just as our impertinent letter-writer has already suggested. A task *may* be more or less difficult; but it is either possible or not possible—there are no gradations. It *might* be more *difficult* to overthrow the Andes than an ant-hill; but it *can* be no more *impossible* to annihilate the matter of the one than the matter of the other. A man may jump ten feet with less *difficulty* than he can jump twenty, but the *impossibility* of his leaping to the moon is not a whit less than that of his leaping to the dog-star.

Since all this is undeniable; since the choice of the mind is to be made between *impossibilities* of conception; since one impossibility cannot be greater than another; and since, thus, one cannot be preferred to another, the philosophers who not only maintain, on the grounds mentioned, man's *idea* of infinity, but, on account of such suppositious idea, *infinity itself*, are plainly engaged in demonstrating one impossible thing to be possible by showing how it is that some one other thing is impossible too. This, it will be said, is nonsense, and perhaps it is; indeed, I think it very capital nonsense, but forego all claim to it as nonsense of mine.

The readiest mode, however, of displaying the fallacy of the philosophical argument on this question, is by simply adverting to a *fact* respecting it which has been

hitherto quite overlooked—the fact that the argument alluded to both proves and disproves its own proposition. "The mind is impelled," say the theologians and others, "to admit a *First Cause*, by the superior difficulty it experiences in conceiving cause beyond cause without end." The quibble, as before, lies in the word "difficulty," but *here* what is it employed to sustain? A First Cause. And what is a First Cause? An ultimate termination of causes. And what is an ultimate termination of causes? Finity—the Finite. Thus the one quibble, in two processes, by God knows how many philosophers, is made to support now Finity and now Infinity; could it not be brought to support something besides? As for the quibbles, *they*, at least, are insupportable. But, to dismiss them; what they prove in the one case is the identical nothing which they demonstrate in the other.

Of course, no one will suppose that I here contend for the absolute impossibility of *that* which we attempt to convey in the word "Infinity." My purpose is but to show the folly of endeavoring to prove Infinity itself, or even our conception of it, by any such blundering ratiocination as that which is ordinarily employed.

Nevertheless, as an individual, I may be permitted to say that I *cannot* conceive Infinity, and am convinced that no human being can. A mind not thoroughly self-conscious, not accustomed to the introspective analysis of its own operations, will, it is true, often deceive itself by supposing that it *has* entertained the conception of which we

speak. In the effort to entertain it, we proceed step beyond step, we fancy point still beyond point; and so long as we *continue* the effort, it may be said, in fact, that we are *tending* to the formation of the idea designed; while the strength of the impression that we actually form or have formed, is in the ratio of the period during which we keep up the mental endeavor. But it is in the act of discontinuing the endeavor—of fulfilling (as we think) the idea—of putting the finishing stroke (as we suppose) to the conception—that we overthrow at once the whole fabric of our fancy by resting upon some one ultimate, and therefore definite, point. This fact, however, we fail to perceive, on account of the absolute coincidence, in time, between the settling down upon the ultimate point and the act of cessation in thinking. In attempting, on the other hand, to frame the idea of a *limited* space, we merely converse the processes which involve the impossibility.

We *believe* in a God. We may or may not *believe* in finite or in infinite space; but our belief, in such cases, is more properly designated as *faith*, and is a matter quite distinct from that belief proper—from that *intellectual* belief—which presupposes the mental conception.

The fact is, that, upon the enunciation of any one of that class of terms to which "Infinity" belongs—the class representing *thoughts of thought*—he who has a right to say that he thinks *at all*, feels himself called upon, *not* to entertain a conception, but simply to direct his mental

vision toward some given point, in the intellectual firmament, where lies a nebula never to be resolved. To solve it, indeed, he makes no effort; for with a rapid instinct he comprehends, not only the impossibility, but, as regards all human purposes, the *inessentiality*, of its solution. He perceives that the Deity has not *designed* it to be solved. He sees, at once, that it lies *out* of the brain of man, and even *how*, if not exactly *why*, it lies out of it. There *are* people, I am aware, who, busying themselves in attempts at the unattainable, acquire very easily, by dint of the jargon they emit, among those thinkers-that-they-think, with whom darkness and depth are synonymous, a kind of cuttle-fish reputation for profundity; but the finest quality of Thought is its self-cognizance; and with some little equivocation, it may be said that no fog of the mind can well be greater than that which, extending to the very boundaries of the mental domain, shuts out even these boundaries themselves from comprehension.

It will now be understood that, in using the phrase, "Infinity of Space," I make no call upon the reader to entertain the impossible conception of an *absolute* infinity. I refer simply to the "*utmost conceivable expanse*" of space—a shadowy and fluctuating domain, now shrinking, now swelling, in accordance with the vacillating energies of the imagination.

Hitherto, the Universe of stars has always been considered as coincident with the Universe proper, as I have defined it in the commencement of this Discourse. It

has been always either directly or indirectly assumed—at least since the dawn of intelligible Astronomy—that, were it possible for us to attain any given point in space, we should still find, on all sides of us, an interminable succession of stars. This was the untenable idea of Pascal when making perhaps the most successful attempt ever made at periphrasing the conception for which we struggle in the word "Universe." "It is a sphere," he says, "of which the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere." But although this intended definition is, in fact, *no* definition of the Universe of *stars*, we may accept it, with some mental reservation, as a definition (rigorous enough for all practical purposes) of the Universe *proper* —that is to say, of the Universe of *space*. This latter, then, let us regard as "*a sphere of which the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere.*" In fact, while we find it impossible to fancy an *end* to space, we have no difficulty in picturing to ourselves any one of an infinity of *beginnings*.

As our starting-point, then, let us adopt the *Godhead*. Of this Godhead, *in itself*, he alone is not imbecile—he alone is not impious—who propounds——nothing. "*Nous ne connaissons rien*," says the Baron de Bielfeld—"*Nous ne connaissons rien de la nature ou de l'essence de Dieu : —pour savoir ce qu'il est, il faut être Dieu même.*"—"We know absolutely *nothing* of the nature or essence of God : —in order to comprehend what he is, we should have to be God ourselves."

"*We should have to be God ourselves!*"—With a phrase so startling as this yet ringing in my ears, I nevertheless venture to demand if this our present ignorance of the Deity is an ignorance to which the soul is *everlastingly* condemned.

By *Him*, however—*now*, at least, the Incomprehensible; by Him, assuming him as *Spirit*—that is to say, as *not Matter*,—a distinction which, for all intelligible purposes, will stand well instead of a definition; by Him, then, existing as Spirit, let us content ourselves, to-night, with supposing to have been *created*, or made out of Nothing, by dint of his Volition, at some point of Space which we will take as a centre, at some period into which we do not pretend to inquire, but at all events immensely remote; by Him, then, again, let us suppose to have been created—*what?* This is a vitally momentous epoch in our considerations. *What* is it that we are justified—that alone we are justified in supposing to have been, primarily and solely, *created?*

We have attained a point where only *Intuition* can aid us; but now let me recur to the idea which I have already suggested as that alone which we can properly entertain of intuition. It is but *the conviction arising from those inductions or deductions of which the processes are so shadowy as to escape our consciousness, elude our reason, or defy our capacity of expression.* With this understanding, I now assert, that an intuition altogether irresistible, although inexpressible, forces me to the con-

clusion that what God originally created—that that Matter which, by dint of his Volition, he first made from his Spirit, or from Nihility, *could* have been nothing but Matter in its utmost conceivable state of——what?—of *Simplicity?*

This will be found the sole absolute *assumption* of my Discourse. I use the word "assumption" in its ordinary sense; yet I maintain that even this my primary proposition is very, very far, indeed, from being really a mere assumption. Nothing was ever more certainly—no human conclusion was ever, in fact, more regularly, more rigorously *de*duced; but, alas! the processes lie out of the human analysis—at all events are beyond the utterance of the human tongue.

Let us now endeavor to conceive what Matter must be when, or if, in its absolute extreme of *Simplicity*. Here the reason flies at once to Imparticularity—to a particle—to *one* particle—a particle of *one* kind—of *one* character—of *one* nature—of *one size*—of one form,—a particle, therefore, "*without* form and void,"—a particle positively a particle at all points,—a particle absolutely unique, individual, undivided, and not indivisible only because He who *created* it, by dint of his Will, can by an infinitely less energetic exercise of the same Will, as a matter of course, divide it.

Oneness, then, is all that I predicate of the originally created Matter; but I propose to show that this *Oneness is a principle abundantly sufficient to account for the con-*

stitution, the existing phenomena, and the plainly inevitable annihilation of at least the material Universe.

The willing into being the primordial particle, has completed the act, or more properly the *conception*, of Creation. We now proceed to the ultimate purpose for which we are to suppose the Particle created—that is to say, the ultimate purpose so far as our considerations *yet* enable us to see it—the constitution of the Universe from it, the Particle.

This constitution has been effected by *forcing* the originally and therefore normally *One* into the abnormal condition of *Many*. An action of this character implies reaction. A diffusion from Unity, under the conditions, involves a tendency to return into Unity—a tendency ineradicable until satisfied. But on these points I will speak more fully hereafter.

The assumption of absolute Unity in the primordial Particle includes that of infinite divisibility. Let us conceive the Particle, then, to be only not totally exhausted by diffusion into Space. From the one Particle, as a centre, let us suppose to be irradiated spherically—in all directions—to immeasurable but still definite distances in the previously vacant space—a certain inexpressibly great yet limited number of unimaginably yet not infinitely minute atoms.

Now, of these atoms, thus diffused, or upon diffusion, what conditions are we permitted, not to assume, but to infer, from consideration as well of their source as of the

character of the design apparent in their diffusion? *Unity* being their source, and *difference from Unity* the character of the design manifested in their diffusion, we are warranted in supposing this character to be at least *generally* preserved throughout the design, and to form a portion of the design itself,—that is to say, we shall be warranted in conceiving continual differences at all points from the uniquity and simplicity of the origin. But, for these reasons, shall we be justified in imagining the atoms heterogeneous, dissimilar, unequal, and inequidistant? More explicitly—are we to consider no two atoms as, at their diffusion, of the same nature, or of the same form, or of the same size?—and, after fulfilment of their diffusion into Space, is absolute inequidistance, each from each, to be understood of all of them? In such arrangement, under such conditions, we most easily and immediately comprehend the subsequent most feasible carrying out to completion of any such design as that which I have suggested—the design of variety out of unity, diversity out of sameness, heterogeneity out of homogeneity, complexity out of simplicity, in a word, the utmost possible multiplicity of *relation* out of the emphatically irrelative *One*. Undoubtedly, therefore, we *should* be warranted in assuming all that has been mentioned, but for the reflection, first, that supererogation is not presumable of any Divine Act; and, secondly, that the object supposed in view appears as feasible when some of the conditions in question are dispensed with, in

the beginning, as when all are understood immediately to exist. I mean to say that some are involved in the rest, or so instantaneous a consequence of them as to make the distinction inappreciable. Difference of *size*, for example, will at once be brought about through the tendency of one atom to a second, in preference to a third, on account of particular inequidistance; which is to be comprehended as *particular inequidistances between centres of quantity, in neighboring atoms of different form*—a matter not at all interfering with the generally equable distribution of the atoms. Difference of *kind*, too, is easily conceived to be merely a result of differences in size and form, taken more or less conjointly:—in fact, since the *Unity* of the Particle Proper implies absolute homogeneity, we cannot imagine the atoms, at their diffusion, differing in kind, without imagining, at the same time, a special exercise of the Divine Will, at the emission of each atom, for the purpose of effecting, in each, a change of its essential nature:—so fantastic an idea is the less to be indulged, as the object proposed is seen to be thoroughly attainable without such minute and elaborate interposition. We perceive, therefore, upon the whole, that it would be supererogation, and consequently unphilosophical, to predicate of the atoms, in view of their purposes, any thing more than *difference of form* at their dispersion, with particular inequidistance after it—all other differences arising at once out of these, in the very first processes of mass constitution. We thus

establish the Universe on a purely *geometrical* basis. Of course, it is by no means necessary to assume absolute difference, even of form, among *all* the atoms irradiated —any more than absolute particular inequidistance of each from each. We are required to conceive merely that no *neighboring* atoms are of similar form—no atoms which can ever approximate, until their inevitable reunition at the end.

Although the immediate and perpetual *tendency* of the disunited atoms to return into their normal Unity is implied, as I have said, in their abnormal diffusion, still it is clear that this tendency will be without consequence—a tendency and no more—until the diffusive energy, in ceasing to be exerted, shall leave *it*, the tendency, free to seek its satisfaction. The Divine Act, however, being considered determinate, and discontinued on fulfilment of the diffusion, we understand, at once, a *reaction*—in other words, a *satisfiable* tendency of the disunited atoms to return into *One*.

But the diffusive energy being withdrawn, and the reaction having commenced in furtherance of the ultimate design—*that of the utmost possible Relation*—this design is now in danger of being frustrated, in detail, by reason of that very tendency to return which is to effect its accomplishment in general. *Multiplicity* is the object; but there is nothing to prevent proximate atoms from lapsing *at once*, through the now satisfiable tendency,—*before* the fulfilment of any ends proposed in multiplicity,

—into absolute oneness among themselves; there is nothing to impede the aggregation of various *unique* masses, at various points of space; in other words, nothing to interfere with the accumulation of various masses, each absolutely One.

For the effectual and thorough completion of the general design, we thus see the necessity for a repulsion of limited capacity—a separative *something* which, on withdrawal of the diffusive Volition, shall at the same time allow the approach, and forbid the junction, of the atoms; suffering them infinitely to approximate, while denying them positive contact; in a word, having the power—*up to a certain epoch*—of preventing their *coalition*, but no ability to interfere with their *coalescence* in any respect *or degree*. The repulsion, already considered as so peculiarly limited in other regards, must be understood, let me repeat, as having power to prevent absolute coalition, *only up to a certain epoch*. Unless we are to conceive that the appetite for Unity among the atoms is doomed to be satisfied *never;* unless we are to conceive that what had a beginning is to have no end—a conception which cannot *really* be entertained, however much we may talk or dream of entertaining it—we are forced to conclude that the repulsive influence imagined, will, finally—under pressure of the *Uni-tendency collectively* applied, but never and in no degree *until*, on fulfilment of the Divine purposes, such collective application shall be naturally made,—yield to a force which, at that ultimate epoch, shall be the

superior force precisely to the extent required, and thus permit the universal subsidence into the inevitable, because original and therefore normal, *One*. The conditions here to be reconciled are difficult indeed; we cannot even comprehend the possibility of their conciliation; nevertheless, the apparent impossibility is brilliantly suggestive.

That the repulsive something actually exists, *we see*. Man neither employs, nor knows, a force sufficient to bring two atoms into contact. This is but the well-established proposition of the impenetrability of matter. All Experiment proves—all Philosophy admits it. The *design* of the repulsion—the necessity for its existence—I have endeavored to show; but from all attempt at investigating its nature have religiously abstained; this on account of an intuitive conviction that the principle at issue is strictly spiritual—lies in a recess impervious to our present understanding—lies involved in a consideration of what now—in our human state—is *not* to be considered—in a consideration of *Spirit in itself*. I feel, in a word, that here the God has interposed, and here only, because here and here only the knot demanded the interposition of the God.

In fact, while the tendency of the diffused atoms to return into Unity will be recognized at once as the principle of the Newtonian Gravity, what I have spoken of as a repulsive influence prescribing limits to the (immediate) satisfaction of the tendency, will be understood as *that*

which we have been in the practice of designating now as heat, now as magnetism, now as *electricity;* displaying our ignorance of its awful character in the vacillation of the phraseology with which we endeavor to circumscribe it.

Calling it, merely for the moment, electricity, we know that all experimental analysis of electricity has given, as an ultimate result, the principle, or seeming principle, *heterogeneity*. *Only* where things differ is electricity apparent; and it is presumable that they *never* differ where it is not developed at least, if not apparent. Now, this result is in the fullest keeping with that which I have reached unempirically. The design of the repulsive influence I have maintained to be that of preventing immediate Unity among the diffused atoms; and these atoms are represented as different each from each. *Difference* is their character—their essentiality,—just as *no-difference* was the essentiality of their course. When we say, then, that an attempt to bring any two of these atoms together would induce an effort, on the part of the repulsive influence, to prevent the contact, we may as well use the strictly convertible sentence that an attempt to bring together any two differences will result in a development of electricity. All existing bodies, of course, are composed of these atoms in proximate contact, and are therefore to be considered as mere assemblages of more or fewer differences; and the resistance made by the repulsive spirit, on bringing together any two such assemblages, would be

in the ratio of the two sums of the differences in each,—an expression which, when reduced, is equivalent to this:—*The amount of electricity developed on the approximation of two bodies, is proportional to the difference between the respective sums of the atoms of which the bodies are composed.* That *no* two bodies are absolutely alike, is a simple corollary from all that has been here said. Electricity, therefore, existing always, is *developed* whenever *any* bodies, but *manifested* only when bodies of appreciable difference, are brought into approximation.

To electricity—so, for the present, continuing to call it—we *may* not be wrong in referring the various physical appearances of light, heat, and magnetism; but far less shall we be liable to err in attributing to this strictly spiritual principle the more important phenomena of vitality, consciousness, and *Thought*. On this topic, however, I need pause *here* merely to suggest that these phenomena, whether observed generally or in detail, seem to proceed *at least in the ratio of the heterogeneous.*

Discarding now the two equivocal terms, "gravitation" and "electricity," let us adopt the more definite expressions, "*attraction*" and "*repulsion.*" The former is the body; the latter the soul: the one is the material, the other the spiritual, principle of the Universe. *No other principles exist. All* phenomena are referable to one, or to the other, or to both combined. So rigorously is this the case—so thoroughly demonstrable is it that attraction and repulsion are the *sole* properties through which we

perceive the Universe—in other words, by which Matter is manifested to Mind—that, for all merely argumentative purposes, we are fully justified in assuming that matter *exists* only as attraction and repulsion—that attraction and repulsion *are* matter; there being no conceivable case in which we may not employ the term "matter," and the terms "attraction" and "repulsion," taken together, as equivalent, and therefore convertible, expressions in logic.

I said, just now, that what I have described as the tendency of the diffused atoms to return into their original unity, would be understood as the principle of the Newtonian law of gravity; and, in fact, there can be but little difficulty in such an understanding, if we look at the Newtonian gravity in a merely general view, as a force impelling matter to seek matter; that is to say, when we pay no attention to the known *modus operandi* of the Newtonian force. The general coincidence satisfies us; but, upon looking closely we see, in detail, much that appears *in*coincident, and much in regard to which no coincidence, at least, is established. For example: the Newtonian gravity, when we think of it in certain moods, does *not* seem to be a tendency to *oneness* at all, but rather a tendency of all bodies in all directions—a phrase apparently expressive of a tendency to diffusion. Here, then, is an *in*coincidence. Again; when we reflect on the mathematical *law* governing the Newtonian tendency, we see clearly that no coincidence has been made good, in respect

of the *modus operandi*, at least, between gravitation as known to exist and that seemingly simple and direct tendency which I have assumed.

In fact, I have attained a point at which it will be advisable to strengthen my position by reversing my processes. So far, we have gone on *a priori*, from an abstract consideration of *Simplicity*, as that quality most likely to have characterized the original action of God. Let us now see whether the established facts of the Newtonian Gravitation may not afford us, *a posteriori*, some legitimate inductions.

What does the Newtonian law declare? That all bodies attract each other with forces proportional to the square of their distances. Purposely, I have given, in the first place, the vulgar version of the law; and I confess that in this, as in most other vulgar versions of great truths, we find little of a suggestive character. Let us now adopt a more philosophical phraseology:—*Every atom, of every body, attracts every other atom, both of its own and of every other body, with a force which varies inversely as the squares of the distances between the attracting and attracted atom.* Here, indeed, a flood of suggestion bursts upon the mind.

But let us see distinctly what it was that Newton *proved*—according to the grossly irrational definitions of *proof* prescribed by the metaphysical schools. He was forced to content himself with showing how thoroughly the motions of an imaginary Universe, composed of attracting

and attracted atoms obedient to the law he announced, coincide with those of the actually existing Universe so far as it comes under our observation. This was the amount of his *demonstration*—that is to say, this was the amount of it, according to the conventional cant of the "philosophies." His successes added proof multiplied by proof—such proof as a sound intellect admits—but the *demonstration* of the law itself, persist the metaphysicians, had not been strengthened in any degree. "*Ocular physical* proof," however, of attraction, here upon Earth, in accordance with the Newtonian theory, was, at length, much to the satisfaction of some intellectual grovellers, afforded. This proof arose collaterally and incidentally (as nearly all important truths have arisen) out of an attempt to ascertain the mean density of the Earth. In the famous Maskelyne, Cavendish, and Bailly experiments for this purpose, the attraction of the mass of a mountain was seen, felt, measured, and found to be mathematically consistent with the immortal theory of the British astronomer.

But in spite of this confirmation of that which needed none—in spite of the so-called corroboration of the "theory" by the so-called "ocular and physical proof"—in spite of the *character* of this corroboration, the ideas which even really philosophical men cannot help imbibing of gravity, and, especially, the ideas of it which ordinary men get and contentedly maintain, are *seen* to have been derived, for the most part, from a consideration of the

principle as they find it developed—*merely in the planet upon which they stand.*

Now, to what does so partial a consideration tend—to what species of error does it give rise? On the Earth we *see* and *feel* only that gravity impels all bodies toward the *centre* of the Earth. No man in the common walks of life could be *made* to see or feel any thing else—could be made to perceive that any thing, anywhere, has a perpetual gravitating tendency in any *other* direction than to the centre of the Earth; yet (with an exception hereafter to be specified) it is a fact that every earthly thing (not to speak now of every heavenly thing) has a tendency not *only* to the Earth's centre but in every conceivable direction besides.

Now, although the philosophic cannot be said to *err with* the vulgar in this matter, they nevertheless permit themselves to be influenced, without knowing it, by the *sentiment* of the vulgar idea. "Although the pagan fables are not believed," says Bryant, in his very erudite "Mythology," "yet we forget ourselves continually and make inferences from them as from existing realities." I mean to assert that the merely *sensitive perception* of gravity as we experience it upon Earth, beguiles mankind into the fancy of *concentralization* or *speciality* respecting it—has been continually biasing toward this fancy even the mightiest intellects—perpetually, although imperceptibly, leading them away from the real characteristics of the principle; thus preventing them, up to this date, from ever getting a glimpse of that vital

truth which lies in a diametrically opposite direction, behind the principle's *essential* characteristics—those, *not* of concentralization or especiality, but of *universality* and *diffusion.* This "vital truth" is *Unity* as the *source* of the phenomenon.

Let me now repeat the definition of gravity:—*Every atom, of every body, attracts every other atom, both of its own and of every other body*, with a force which varies inversely as the squares of the distances of the attracting and attracted atom.

Here let the reader pause with me, for a moment, in contemplation of the miraculous, of the ineffable, of the altogether unimaginable, complexity of relation involved in the fact that *each atom attracts every other atom*—involved merely in this fact of the attraction, without reference to the law or mode in which the attraction is manifested—involved *merely* in the fact that each atom attracts every other atom *at all*, in a wilderness of atoms so numerous that those which go to the composition of a cannon-ball exceed, probably, in mere point of number, all the stars which go to the constitution of the Universe.

Had we discovered, simply, that each atom tended to some one favorite point—to some especially attractive atom,—we should still have fallen upon a discovery which, in itself, would have sufficed to overwhelm the mind:—but what is it that we are actually called upon to comprehend? That each atom attracts—sympathizes with

the most delicate movements of every other atom, and with each and with all at the same time, and forever, and according to a determinate law of which the complexity, even considered by itself solely, is utterly beyond the grasp of the imagination of man. If I propose to ascertain the influence of one mote in a sunbeam upon its neighboring mote, I cannot accomplish my purpose without first counting and weighing all the atoms in the Universe, and defining the precise positions of all at one particular moment. If I venture to displace, by even the billionth part of an inch, the microscopical speck of dust which lies now upon the point of my finger, what is the character of that act upon which I have adventured? I have done a deed which shakes the Moon in her path, which causes the Sun to be no longer the sun, and which alters forever the destiny of the multitudinous myriads of stars that roll and glow in the majestic presence of their Creator.

These ideas—conceptions such as *these*—unthoughtlike thoughts—soul-reveries rather than conclusions, or even considerations of the intellect;—ideas, I repeat, such as these, are such as we can alone hope profitably to entertain in any effort at grasping the great principle, *Attraction.*

But now, *with* such ideas—with such a *vision* of the marvellous complexity of Attraction fairly in his mind—let any person competent of thought on such topics as these, set himself to the task of imagining a *principle*

for the phenomena observed—a condition from which they sprang.

Does not so evident a brotherhood among the atoms point to a common parentage? Does not a sympathy so omniprevalent, so ineradicable, and so thoroughly irrespective, suggest a common paternity as its source? Does not one extreme impel the reason to the other? Does not the infinitude of division refer to the utterness of individuality? Does not the entireness of the complex hint at the perfection of the simple? It is *not* that the atoms, as we see them, are divided or that they are complex in their relations, but that they are inconceivably divided and unutterably complex: it is the extremeness of the conditions to which I now allude, rather than to the conditions themselves. In a word, is it not because the atoms were, at some remote epoch of time, even *more than together*—is it not because originally, and therefore normally, they were *One*—that now, in all circumstances, at all points, in all directions, by all modes of approach, in all relations and through all conditions, they struggle *back* to this absolutely, this irrelatively, this unconditionally *one?*

Some person may here demand: "Why, since it is to the *One* that the atoms struggle back, do we not find and define Attraction 'a merely general tendency to a centre'?—why, in especial, do not *your* atoms—the atoms which you describe as having been irradiated from a centre—proceed at once, rectilinearly, back to the central point of their origin?"

I reply that *they do*, as will be distinctly shown; but that the cause of their so doing is quite irrespective of the centre *as such*. They all tend rectilinearly toward a centre, because of the sphericity with which they have been irradiated into space. Each atom, forming one of a generally uniform globe of atoms, finds more atoms in the direction of the centre, of course, than in any other, and in that direction, therefore, is impelled, but is *not* thus impelled because the centre is *the point of its origin*. It is not to any *point* that the atoms are allied. It is not any *locality*, either in the concrete or in the abstract, to which I suppose them bound. Nothing like *location* was conceived as their origin. Their source lies in the principle, *Unity*. *This* is their lost parent. *This* they seek always—immediately—in all directions—wherever it is even partially to be found; thus appeasing, in some measure, the ineradicable tendency, while on the way to its absolute satisfaction in the end. It follows from all this, that any principle which shall be adequate to account for the *law*, or *modus operandi*, of the attractive force in general, will account for this law in particular:—that is to say, any principle which will show why the atoms should tend to their *general centre of irradiation* with forces inversely proportioned to the squares of the distances will be admitted as satisfactorily accounting, at the same time, for the tendency, according to the same law, of these atoms each to each; *for* the tendency to the centre *is* merely the tendency each to each, and not any tendency

to a centre as such. Thus it will be seen, also, that the establishment of my propositions would involve no *necessity* of modification in the terms of the Newtonian definition of Gravity, which declares that each atom attracts each other atom and so forth, and declares this merely; but (always under the supposition that what I propose be, in the end, admitted) it seems clear that some error might occasionally be avoided, in the future processes of Science, were a more ample phraseology adopted,—for instance: —"Each atom tends to every other atom, etc., with a force, etc.; *the general result being a tendency of all, with a similar force, to a general centre.*"

The reversal of our processes has thus brought us to an identical result; but while in the one process *intuition* was the starting-point, in the other it was the goal. In commencing the former journey I could only say that, with an irresistible intuition, I *felt* Simplicity to have been made the characteristic of the original action of God; in ending the latter, I can only declare that, with an irresistible intuition, I perceive Unity to have been the source of the observed phenomena of the Newtonian Gravitation. Thus, according to the schools, I *prove* nothing. So be it; I design but to suggest—and to *convince* through the suggestion. I am proudly aware that there exist many of the most profound and cautiously discriminative human intellects which cannot *help* being abundantly content with my—suggestions. To these intellects—as to my own—there is no mathematical demonstration which *could*

bring the least additional *true proof* of the great *Truth* which I have advanced—*the truth of Original Unity as the source, as the principle, of the Universal Phenomena.* For my part I am not sure that I speak and see—I am not so sure that my heart beats and that my soul lives; of the rising of to-morrow's sun—a probability that as yet lies in the Future—I do not pretend to be one thousandth part as sure, as I am of the irretrievably by-gone *Fact* that All Things and All Thoughts of Things, with all their ineffable Multiplicity of Relation, sprang at once into being from the primordial and irrelative *One.*

Referring to the Newtonian Gravity, Dr. Nichol, the eloquent author of "The Architecture of the Heavens," says: "In truth we have no reason to suppose this great Law, as now revealed, to be the ultimate or simplest, and therefore the universal and all comprehensive, form of a great Ordinance. The mode in which its intensity diminishes with the element of distance, has not the aspect of an ultimate *principle;* which always assumes the simplicity and self-evidence of those axioms which constitute the basis of Geometry."

Now, it is quite true that "ultimate principles," in the common understanding of the words, always assume the simplicity of geometrical axioms (as for "self-evidence," there is no such thing) but these principles are clearly *not* "ultimate"; in other terms, what we are in the habit of calling principles are no principles, properly speaking, since there can be but one *principle*, the Volition of God.

We have no right to assume, then, from what we observe in rules that we choose foolishly to name "principles," any thing at all in respect to the characteristics of a principle proper. The "ultimate principles" of which Dr. Nichol speaks as having geometrical simplicity, may and do have this geometrical turn, as being part and parcel of a vast geometrical system, and thus a system of simplicity itself, in which, nevertheless, the *truly* ultimate principle is, *as we know*, the consummation of the complex—that is to say, of the unintelligible, for is it not the Spiritual Capacity of God?

I quoted Dr. Nichol's remark, however, not so much to question its philosophy, as by way of calling attention to the fact that while all men have admitted *some* principle as existing behind the law of Gravity, no attempt has been yet made to point out what this principle in particular *is*, if we except, perhaps, occasional fantastic efforts at referring it to Magnetism, or Mesmerism, or Swedenborgianism, or Transcendentalism, or some other equally delicious *ism* of the same species, and invariably patronized by one and the same species of people. The great mind of Newton, while boldly grasping the Law itself, shrank from the principle of the Law. The more fluent and comprehensive at least, if not the more patient and profound, sagacity of Laplace had not the courage to attack it. But hesitation on the part of these two astronomers it is, perhaps, not so very difficult to understand. They, as well as all the first class of mathematicians, were

mathematicians *solely*: their intellect at least had a firmly pronounced mathematico-physical tone. What lay not distinctly within the domain of Physics, or of Mathematics, seemed to them either Non-Entity or Shadow. Nevertheless, we may well wonder that Leibnitz, who was a marked exception to the general rule in these respects, and whose mental temperament was a singular admixture of the mathematical with the physico-metaphysical, did not at once investigate and establish the point at issue. Either Newton or Laplace, seeking a principle and discovering none *physical*, would have rested contentedly in the conclusion that there was absolutely none; but it is almost impossible to fancy, of Leibnitz, that, having exhausted in his search the physical dominions, he would not have stepped at once, boldly and hopefully, amid his old familiar haunts in the kingdom of Metaphysics. Here, indeed, it is clear that he *must* have adventured in search of the treasure; that he did not find it after all, was, perhaps, because his fairy guide, Imagination, was not sufficiently well-grown, or well-educated, to direct him aright.

I observed, just now, that, in fact, there had been certain vague attempts at referring Gravity to some very uncertain *isms*. These attempts, however, although considered bold, and justly so considered, looked no further than to the generality—the merest generality—of the Newtonian Law. Its *modus operandi* has never, to my knowledge, been approached in the way of an effort at explanation. It is, therefore, with no unwarrantable fear

of being taken for a madman at the outset, and before I can bring my propositions fairly to the eye of those who alone are competent to decide upon them, that I here declare the *modus operandi* of the Law of Gravity to be an exceedingly simple and perfectly explicable thing,—that is to say, when we make our advances toward it in just gradations and in the true direction—when we regard it from the proper point of view.

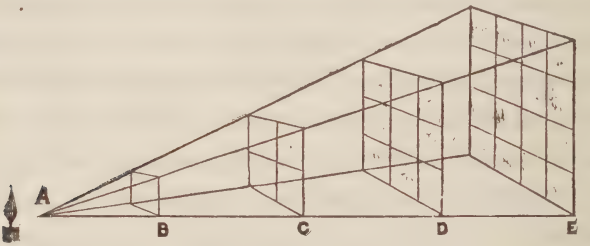
Whether we reach the idea of absolute *Unity* as the source of All Things, from a consideration of Simplicity as the most probable characteristic of the original action of God; whether we arrive at it from an inspection of the universality of the relation in the gravitating phenomena, or whether we attain it as a result of the mutual corroboration afforded by both processes, still, the idea itself, if entertained at all, is entertained in inseparable connection with another idea—that of the condition of the Universe of stars as we *now* perceive it,—that is to say, a condition of immeasurable *diffusion* through space. Now a connection between these two ideas—unity and diffusion—cannot be established unless through the entertainment of a third idea—that of *irradiation*. Absolute Unity being taken as a centre, then the existing Universe of stars is the result of *irradiation* from that centre.

Now, the laws of irradiation are *known*. They are part and parcel of the *sphere*. They belong to the class of *indisputable geometrical properties*. We say of them, "they are true—they are evident." To demand *why* they are

true, would be to demand why the axioms are true upon which their demonstration is based. *Nothing* is demonstrable, strictly speaking; but *if* any thing *be*, then the properties—the laws in question—are demonstrated.

But these laws—what do they declare? Irradiation—how—by what steps does it proceed outwardly from a centre?

From a *luminous* centre, *Light* issues by irradiation; and the quantities of light received upon any given plane, supposed to be shifting its position so as to be now nearer



the centre and now farther from it, will be diminished in the same proportion as the squares of the distances of the plane from the luminous body are increased; and will be increased in the same proportion as these squares are diminished.

The expression of the law may be thus generalized:—the number of light-particles (or, if the phrase be preferred, the number of light-impressions) received upon the shifting plane, will be *inversely* proportional with the squares of the distances of the plane. Generalizing yet again, we may say that the diffusion—the scattering—the

irradiation, in a word—is *directly* proportional with the squares of the distances.

For example: at the distance B, from the luminous centre A, a certain number of particles are so diffused as to occupy the surface B. Then at double the distance—that is to say, at C—they will be so much farther diffused as to occupy four such surfaces; at treble the distance, or at D, they will be so much farther separated as to occupy nine such surfaces; while, at quadruple the distance, or at E, they will have become so scattered as to spread themselves over sixteen such surfaces—and so on forever.

In saying, generally, that the irradiation proceeds in direct proportion with the squares of the distances, we use the term irradiation to express *the degree of the diffusion* as we proceed outwardly from the centre. Conversing the idea, and employing the word "concentralization" to express *the degree of the drawing together* as we come back toward the centre from an outward position, we may say that concentralization proceeds *inversely* as the squares of the distances. In other words, we have reached the conclusion that, on the hypothesis that matter was originally irradiated from a centre, and is now returning to it, the concentralization, in the return, proceeds *exactly as we know the force of gravitation to proceed.*

Now here, if we could be permitted to assume that concentralization exactly represented the *force of the tendency to the centre*—that the one was exactly propor-

tional to the other, and that the two proceeded together —we should have shown all that is required. The sole difficulty existing, then, is to establish a direct proportion between "concentralization" and the *force* of concentralization; and this is done, of course, if we establish such proportion between "irradiation" and the *force* of irradiation.

A very slight inspection of the heavens assures us that the stars have a certain general uniformity, equability, or equidistance of distribution through that region of space in which, collectively, and in a roughly globular form, they are situated; this species of very general, rather than absolute, equability, being in full keeping with my deduction of inequidistance, within certain limits, among the originally diffused atoms, as a corollary from the evident design of infinite complexity of relation out of irrelation. I started, it will be remembered, with the idea of a generally uniform but particularly *un*uniform distribution of the atoms,—an idea, I repeat, which an inspection of the stars, as they exist, confirms.

But even in the merely general equability of distribution, as regards the atoms, there appears a difficulty which, no doubt, has already suggested itself to those among my readers who have borne in mind that I suppose this equability of distribution effected through *irradiation from a centre*. The very first glance at the idea, irradiation, forces us to the entertainment of the hitherto unseparated and seemingly inseparable idea of agglomeration about a

centre, with dispersion as we recede from it—the idea, in a word, of *in*equability of distribution in respect to the matter irradiated.

Now, I have elsewhere * observed, that it is by just such difficulties as the one now in question—such roughnesses—such peculiarities—such protuberances above the plane of the ordinary—that Reason feels her way—if at all, in her search for the True. By the difficulty—the "peculiarity"—now presented, I leap at once to *the* secret—a secret which I might never have attained *but* for the peculiarity and the inferences which, *in its mere character of peculiarity*, it affords me.

The process of thought, at this point, may be thus roughly sketched. I say to myself: "Unity, as I have explained it, is a truth—I feel it. Diffusion is a truth—I see it. Irradiation, by which alone these two truths are reconciled, is a consequent truth—I perceive it. *Equability* of diffusion, first deduced *à priori* and then corroborated by the inspection of phenomena, is also a truth—I fully admit it. So far all is clear around me; there are no clouds behind which *the* secret—the great secret of the gravitating *modus operandi*—can possibly lie hidden; but this secret lies *hereabouts*, most assuredly; and *were* there but a cloud in view I should be driven to suspicion of that cloud." And now, just as I say this, there actually comes a cloud into view. This cloud is the seeming impossibility of reconciling my truth, *irradiation*, with my truth,

* "*Murders in the Rue Morgue.*"

equability of diffusion. I say now: "Behind this *seeming* impossibility is to be found what I desire." I do not say "*real* impossibility"; for invincible faith in my truths assures me that it is a mere difficulty after all; but I go on to say, with unflinching confidence, that, *when* this *difficulty* shall be solved, we shall find, *wrapped up in the process of solution*, the key to the secret at which we aim. Moreover—I *feel* that we shall discover *but one* possible solution of the difficulty; this for the reason that, were there two, one would be supererogatory—would be fruitless—would be empty—would contain no key—since no duplicate key can be needed to any secret of Nature.

And now, let us see:—Our usual notions of irradiation—in fact, *all* our distinct notions of it—are caught merely from the process as we see it exemplified in *Light*. Here there is a *continuous* outpouring of *ray-streams*, and *with a force which we have at least no right to suppose never varies at all.* Now, in any such irradiation *as this*—continuous and of unvarying force—the regions nearer the centre must *inevitably* be always more crowded with the irradiated matter than the regions more remote. But I have assumed *no* such irradiation *as this*. I assumed no *continuous* irradiation; and for the simple reason that such an assumption would have involved, first, the necessity of entertaining a conception which I have shown no man *can* entertain, and which (as I will more fully explain hereafter) all observation of the firmament refutes—the conception of the absolute infinity of the Universe of

stars—and would have involved, secondly, the impossibility of understanding a reaction—that is, gravitation—as existing now—since, while an act is continued, no reaction, of course, can take place. My assumption, then, or rather my inevitable deduction from just premises,—was that of a *determinate* irradiation—one finally *dis*continued.

Let me now describe the sole possible mode in which it is conceivable that matter could have been diffused through space, so as to fulfil the conditions at once of irradiation and of generally equable distribution.

For convenience of illustration, let us imagine, in the first place, a hollow sphere of glass, or any thing else, occupying the space throughout which the universal matter is to be thus equally diffused, by means of irradiation, from the absolute, irrelative, unconditional particle, placed in the centre of the sphere.

Now, a certain exertion of the diffusive power (presumed to be the Divine Volition)—in other words, a certain *force*—whose measure is the quantity of matter—that is to say, the number of atoms—emitted; emits, by irradiation, this certain number of atoms; forcing them in all directions outwardly from the centre—their proximity to each other diminishing as they proceed—until, finally, they are distributed, loosely, over the interior surface of the sphere.

When these atoms have attained this position, or while proceeding to attain it, a second and inferior exercise of

the same force—or a second and inferior force of the same character—emits, in the same manner—that is to say, by irradiation as before—a second stratum of atoms which proceeds to deposit itself upon the first; the number of atoms, in this case as in the former, being of course the measure of the force which emitted them; in other words, the force being precisely adapted to the purpose it effects—the force, and the number of atoms sent out by the force, being *directly proportional.*

When this second stratum has reached its destined position—or while approaching it—a third still inferior exertion of the force, or a third inferior force of a similar character—the number of atoms emitted being in *all* cases the measure of the force—proceeds to deposit a third stratum upon the second:—and so on, until these concentric strata, growing gradually less and less, come down at length to the central point; and the diffusive matter, simultaneously with the diffusive force, is exhausted.

We have now the sphere filled, through means of irradiation, with atoms equably diffused. The two necessary conditions—those of irradiation and of equable diffusion—are satisfied; and by the *sole* process in which the possibility of their simultaneous satisfaction is conceivable. For this reason, I confidently expect to find, lurking in the present condition of the atoms as distributed throughout the sphere, the secret of which I am in search—the all-important principle of the *modus operandi* of the Newtonian law. Let us examine, then, the actual condition of the atoms.

They lie in a state of concentric strata. They are equably diffused throughout the sphere. They have been irradiated into these states.

The atoms being *equably* distributed, the greater the superficial extent of any of these concentric strata, or spheres, the more atoms will lie upon it. In other words, the number of atoms lying upon the surface of any one of the concentric spheres, is directly proportional with the extent of that surface.

*But in any series of concentric spheres, the surfaces are directly proportional with the squares of the distances from the centre.**

Therefore the number of atoms in any stratum is directly proportional with the square of that stratum's distance from the centre.

But the number of atoms in any stratum is the measure of the force which emitted that stratum—that is to say, is *directly proportional* with the force.

Therefore the force which irradiated any stratum is directly proportional with the square of that stratum's distance from the centre :—or, generally,

The force of the irradiation has been directly proportional with the squares of the distances.

Now, Reaction, as far as we know any thing of it, is Action conversed. The *general* principle of Gravity being, in the first place, understood as the reaction of an act—as the expression of a desire on the part of Matter, while ex-

* Succinctly—The surfaces of spheres are as the squares of their radii.

isting in a state of diffusion, to return into the Unity whence it was diffused; and, in the second place, the mind being called upon to determine the *character* of the desire—the manner in which it would, naturally, be manifested; in other words, being called upon to conceive a probable law, or *modus operandi*, for the return, could not well help arriving at the conclusion that this law or return would be precisely the converse of the law of departure. That such would be the case, any one, at least, would be abundantly justified in taking for granted, until such time as some persons should suggest something like a plausible reason why it should *not* be the case—until such period as a law of return shall be imagined which the intellect can consider as preferable.

Matter, then, irradiated into space with a force varying as the squares of the distances, might *a priori*, be supposed to return toward its centre of irradiation with a force varying *inversely* as the squares of the distances: and I have already shown * that any principle which will explain why the atoms should tend, according to any law, to the general centre, must be admitted as satisfactorily explaining, at the same time, why, according to the same law, they should tend each to each. For, in fact, the tendency to the general centre is not to a centre as such, but because of its being a point in tending toward which each atom tends most directly to its real and essential centre, *Unity*—the absolute and final Union of all.

* Page 48.

The consideration here involved presents to my own mind no embarrassment whatever—but this fact does not blind me to the possibility of its being obscure to those who may have been less in the habit of dealing with abstractions:—and, upon the whole, it may be as well to look at the matter from one or two other points of view.

The absolute, irrelative particle primarily created by the Volition of God, must have been in a condition of positive *normality*, or rightfulness—for wrongfulness implies *relation*. Right is positive; wrong is negative—is merely the negation of right; as cold is the negation of heat—darkness of light. That a thing may be wrong, it is necessary that there be some other thing in *relation* to which it *is* wrong—some condition which it fails to satisfy; some law which it violates; some being whom it aggrieves. If there be no such being, law, or condition, in respect to which the thing is wrong—and, still more especially, if no beings, laws, or conditions exist at all—then the thing can *not* be wrong, and consequently must be *right*. Any deviation from normality involves a tendency to return to it. A difference from the normal—from the right—from the just—can be understood as effected only by the overcoming a difficulty; and if the force which overcomes the difficulty be not infinitely continued, the ineradicable tendency to return will at length be permitted to act for its own satisfaction. Upon withdrawal of the force, the tendency acts. This is the principle of reaction as the inevitable consequence of finite action. Employing a phrase-

ology of which the seeming affectation will be pardoned for its expressiveness, we may say that Reaction is the return from the condition of *as it is and ought not to be* into the condition of *as it was, originally, and therefore ought to be:*—and let me add here that the *absolute* force of Reaction would no doubt be always found in direct proportion with the reality—the truth—the absoluteness—of the *originality*—if ever it were possible to measure this latter:—and, consequently, the greatest of all conceivable reactions must be that produced by the tendency which we now discuss—the tendency to return into the *absolutely original*—into the *supremely* primitive. Gravity, then, *must be the strongest of forces*—an idea reached *a priori* and abundantly confirmed by induction. What use I make of the idea will be seen in the sequel.

The atoms, now, having been diffused from their normal condition of Unity, seek to return to——what? Not to any particular *point*, certainly; for it is clear that if, upon the diffusion, the whole Universe of matter had been projected, collectively, to a distance from the point of irradiation, the atomic tendency to the general centre of the sphere would not have been disturbed in the least:—the atoms would not have sought the point *in absolute space* from which they were originally impelled. It is merely the *condition*, and not the point or locality at which this condition took its rise, that these atoms seek to re-establish;—it is merely *that condition which is their normality*, that they desire. "But they seek a centre," it will be

said, "and a centre is a point." True; but they seek this point not in its character of point—(for, were the whole sphere moved from its position, they would seek, equally, the centre; and the centre *then* would be a *new* point)—but because it so happens, on account of the form in which they collectively exist (that of the sphere), that only *through* the point in question—the sphere's centre—they can attain their true object, Unity. In the direction of the centre each atom perceives more atoms than in any other direction. Each atom is impelled toward the centre because along the straight line joining it and the centre and passing on to the circumference beyond, there lie a greater number of atoms than along any other straight line—a greater number of objects that seek it, the individual atoms—a greater number of tendencies to Unity—a greater number of satisfactions for its own tendency to Unity—in a word, because in the direction of the centre lies the utmost possibility of satisfaction, generally, for its own individual appetite. To be brief, the *condition*, Unity, is all that is really sought; and if the atoms *seem* to seek the centre of the sphere, it is only impliedly, through implication—because such centre happens to imply, to include, or to involve, the only essential centre, Unity. But *on account of* this implication or involution, there is no possibility of practically separating the tendency to Unity in the abstract, from the tendency to the concrete centre. Thus the tendency of the atoms to the general centre *is*, to all practical intents and for all logical

purposes, the tendency each to each; and the tendency each to each *is* the tendency to the centre; and the one tendency may be assumed *as* the other; whatever will apply to the one must be thoroughly applicable to the other; and, in conclusion, whatever principle will satisfactorily explain the one, cannot be questioned as an explanation of the other.

In looking carefully around me for a rational objection to what I have advanced, I am able to discover *nothing;* —but of that class of objections usually urged by the doubters for Doubt's sake, I very readily perceive *three;* and proceed to dispose of them in order.

It may be said, first: "That the proof that the force of irradiation (in the case described) is directly proportional to the squares of the distances, depends upon an unwarranted assumption—that of the number of atoms in each stratum being the measure of the force with which they are emitted."

I reply, not only that I am warranted in such assumption, but that I should be utterly *un*warranted in any other. What I assume is, simply, that an effect is the measure of its cause—that every exercise of the Divine Will will be proportional to that which demands the exertion—that the means of Omnipotence, or Omniscience, will be exactly adapted to its purposes. Neither can a deficiency nor an excess of cause bring to pass any effect. Had the force which irradiated any stratum to its position been either more or less than was needed for the purpose

—that is to say, not *directly proportional* to the purpose—then to its position that stratum could not have been irradiated. Had the force which, with a view to general equability of distribution, emitted the proper number of atoms for each stratum been not *directly proportional* to the number, then the number would *not* have been the number demanded for the equable distribution.

The second supposable objection is somewhat better entitled to an answer.

It is an admitted principle in Dynamics that every body, on receiving an impulse, or disposition to move, will move onward in a straight line, in the direction imparted by the impelling force, until deflected, or stopped, by some other force. How then, it may be asked, is my first or external stratum of atoms to be understood as discontinuing their movement at the circumference of the imaginary glass sphere, when no second force, of more than an imaginary character, appears, to account for the discontinuance?

I reply that the objection, in this case, actually does arise out of "an unwarranted assumption"—on the part of the objector—the assumption of a principle, in Dynamics, at an epoch when *no* "principles," in *any thing*, exist:—I use the word "principle," of course, in the objector's understanding of the word.

"In the beginning" we can admit—indeed we can comprehend—but one *First Cause*—the truly ultimate *Principle*—the Volition of God. The primary *act*—that of Irradiation from Unity—must have been independent of

all that which the world now calls "principle"—because all that we so designate is but a consequence of the reaction of that primary act:—I say "*primary*" act; for the creation of the absolute material particle is more properly to be regarded as a *conception* than as an "*act*" in the ordinary meaning of the term. Thus, we must regard the primary act as an act for the establishment of what we now call "principle." But this primary act itself is to be considered as *continuous Volition*. The Thought of God is to be understood as originating the Diffusion as proceeding with it—as regulating it—and, finally, as being withdrawn from it upon its completion. *Then* commences Reaction, and through Reaction, "Principle," as we employ the word. It will be advisable, however, to limit the application of this word to the two *immediate* results of the discontinuance of the Divine Volition—that is, to the two agents, *Attraction* and *Repulsion*. Every other Natural agent depends, either more or less immediately upon these two, and therefore would be more conveniently designated as *sub*-principle.

It may be objected, thirdly, that, in general, the peculiar mode of distribution which I have suggested for the atoms, is "an hypothesis and nothing more."

Now, I am aware that the word hypothesis is a ponderous sledge-hammer, grasped immediately, if not lifted, by all very diminutive thinkers, upon the first appearance of any proposition wearing, in any particular, the garb of a *theory*. But "hypothesis" cannot be wielded *here* to

any good purpose, even by those who succeed in lifting it—little men or great.

I maintain, first, that *only* in the mode described is it conceivable that Matter could have been diffused so as to fulfil at once the conditions of irradiation and of generally equable distribution. I maintain, secondly, that these conditions themselves have been imposed upon me, as necessities, in a train of ratiocination *as rigorously logical as that which establishes any demonstration in Euclid;* and I maintain, thirdly, that even if the charge of "hypothesis" were as fully sustained as it is, in fact, unsustained and untenable, still the validity and indisputability of my result would not, even in the slightest particular, be disturbed.

To explain:—The Newtonian Gravity—a law of Nature—a law whose existence as such no one out of the Bedlam questions—a law whose admission as such enables us to account for nine tenths of the Universal phenomena—a law which, merely because it does so enable us to account for these phenomena, we are perfectly willing, without reference to any other considerations, to admit, and cannot help admitting, as a law—a law, nevertheless, of which neither the principle nor the *modus operandi* of the principle, has ever yet been traced by the human analysis—a law, in short, which, neither in its detail nor in its generality, has been found susceptible of explanation *at all*—is at length seen to be at every point thoroughly explicable, provided we only yield our assent to——what? To an

hypothesis? Why *if* an hypothesis—if the merest hypothesis—if an hypothesis for whose assumption—as in the case of that *pure* hypothesis the Newtonian law itself—no shadow of *a priori* reason could be assigned—if an hypothesis, even so absolute as all this implies, would enable us to perceive a principle for the Newtonian law—would enable us to understand as satisfied, conditions so miraculously—so ineffably complex and seemingly irreconcilable as those involved in the relations of which Gravity tells us,—what rational being *could* so expose his fatuity as to call even this absolute hypothesis an hypothesis any longer—unless, indeed, he were to persist in so calling it, with the understanding that he did so, simply for the sake of consistency *in words?*

But what is the true state of our present case? What is *the fact?* Not only that it is *not* an hypothesis which we are required *to adopt*, in order to admit the principle at issue explained, but that it *is* a logical conclusion which we are requested *not* to adopt if we can avoid it—which we are simply invited to *deny if we can*:—a conclusion of so accurate a logicality that to dispute it would be the effort—to doubt its validity, beyond our power:—a conclusion from which we see no mode of escape, turn as we will; a result which confronts us either at the end of an *in*ductive journey from the phenomena of the very Law discussed, or at the close of a *de*ductive career from the most rigorously simple of all conceivable assumptions—*the assumption, in a word, of Simplicity itself.*

And if here, for the mere sake of cavilling, it be urged, that although my starting-point is, as I assert, the assumption of absolute Simplicity, yet Simplicity, considered merely in itself, is no axiom; and that only deductions from axioms are indisputable—it is thus that I reply:

Every other science than Logic is the science of certain concrete relations. Arithmetic, for example, is the science of the relations of number—Geometry, of the relations of form—Mathematics in general, of the relations of quantity in general—of whatever can be increased or diminished. Logic, however, is the science of Relation in the abstract—of absolute Relation—of Relation considered solely in itself. An axiom in any particular science other than Logic is, thus, merely a proposition announcing certain concrete relations which seem to be too obvious for dispute—as when we say, for instance, that the whole is greater than its part:—and, thus again, the principle of the *Logical* axiom—in other words, of an axiom in the abstract—is, simply, *obviousness of relation.* Now, it is clear, not only that what is obvious to one mind may not be obvious to another, but that what is obvious to one mind at one epoch, may be any thing but obvious, at another epoch, to the same mind. It is clear, moreover, that what, to-day, is obvious even to the majority of mankind, or to the majority of the best intellects of mankind, may to-morrow be, to either majority, more or less obvious, or in no respect obvious at all. It is seen, then, that the *axiomatic principle* itself is susceptible of variation, and of

course that axioms are susceptible of similar change. Being mutable, the "truths" which grow out of them are necessarily mutable too; or, in other words, are never to be positively depended upon as truths at all—since Truth and Immutability are one.

It will now be readily understood that no axiomatic idea—no idea founded in the fluctuating principle, obviousness of relation—can possibly be so secure—so reliable a basis for any structure erected by the Reason, as *that* idea (whatever it is, wherever we can find it, or *if* it be practicable to find it anywhere) which is *ir*relative altogether—which not only presents to the understanding *no obviousness* of relation, either greater or less, to be considered, but subjects the intellect not in the slightest degree to the necessity of even looking at *any relation at all.* If such an idea be not what we too heedlessly term "an axiom," it is at least preferable, as a Logical basis, to any axiom ever propounded, or to all imaginable axioms combined; and such, precisely, is the idea with which my deductive process, so thoroughly corroborated by induction, commences. My *particle proper* is but *absolute Irrelation.* To sum up what has been advanced: As a starting-point I have taken it for granted, simply, that the Beginning had nothing behind it or before it—that it was a Beginning in fact—that it was a beginning and nothing different from a beginning—in short, that this Beginning was—*that which it was.* If this be a "mere assumption," then a "mere assumption" let it be.

To conclude this branch of the subject: I am fully warranted in announcing that *the Law which we have been in the habit of calling Gravity exists on account of Matter's having been irradiated, at its origin, atomically, into a limited* sphere of Space, from one, individual, unconditional, irrelative, and absolute Particle Proper, by the sole process in which it was possible to satisfy, at the same time, the two conditions, irradiation, and generally-equable distribution throughout the sphere—that is to say, by a force varying in direct proportion with the squares of the distances between the irradiated atoms, respectively, and the Particular centre of Irradiation.*

I have already given my reasons for presuming Matter to have been diffused by a determinate rather than by a continuous or infinitely continued force. Supposing a continuous force, we should be unable, in the first place, to comprehend a reaction at all; and we should be required, in the second place, to entertain the impossible conception of an infinite extension of Matter. Not to dwell upon the impossibility of the conception, the infinite extension of Matter is an idea which, if not positively disproved, is at least not in any respect warranted by telescopic observation of the stars—a point to be explained more fully hereafter; and this empirical reason for believing in the original finity of Matter is unempirically confirmed. For example: Admitting, for the moment, the

* "Limited sphere"—A sphere is *necessarily* limited. I prefer tautology to a chance of misconception.

possibility of understanding Space *fitted* with the irradiated atoms—that is to say, admitting, as well as we can, for argument's sake, that the succession of the irradiated atoms had absolutely *no end*—then it is abundantly clear that, even when the Volition of God had been withdrawn from them, and thus the tendency to return into Unity permitted (abstractly) to be satisfied, this permission would have been nugatory and invalid—practically valueless and of no effect whatever. No Reaction could have taken place; no movement toward Unity could have been made; no Law of Gravity could have obtained.

To explain:—Grant the *abstract* tendency of any one atom to any one other as the inevitable result of diffusion from the normal Unity:—or, what is the same thing, admit any given atom as *proposing* to move in any given direction—it is clear that, since there is an *infinity* of atoms on all sides of the atom proposing to move, it never can actually move toward the satisfaction of its tendency in the direction given, on account of a precisely equal and counter-balancing tendency in the direction diametrically opposite. In other words, exactly as many tendencies to Unity are behind the hesitating atom as before it; for it is a mere sotticism to say that one infinite line is longer or shorter than another infinite line, or that one infinite number is greater or less than another number that is infinite. Thus the atom in question must remain stationary forever. Under the impossible circumstances which we have been merely endeavoring to conceive for argument's

sake, there could have been no aggregate of Matter—no stars—no worlds—nothing but a perpetually atomic and inconsequential Universe. In fact, view it as we will, the whole idea of unlimited Matter is not only untenable, but impossible and preposterous.

With the understanding of a *sphere* of atoms, however, we perceive, at once, a *satisfiable* tendency to union. The general result of the tendency each to each, being a tendency of all to the centre, the *general* process of condensation, or approximation, commences immediately, by a common and simultaneous movement, on withdrawal of the Divine Volition; the *individual* approximations, or coalescences—*not* coalitions—of atom with atom, being subject to almost infinite variations of time, degree, and conditions, on account of the excessive multiplicity of relation, arising from the differences of form assumed as characterizing the atoms at the moment of their quitting the Particle Proper; as well as from the subsequent particular inequidistance, each from each.

What I wish to impress upon the reader is the certainty of there arising, at once, (on withdrawal of the diffusive force, or Divine Volition,) out of the condition of the atoms as described, at innumerable points throughout the Universal sphere, innumerable agglomerations, characterized by innumerable specific differences of form, size, essential nature, and distance each from each. The development of Repulsion (Electricity) must have commenced, of course, with the very earliest particular

efforts at Unity, and must have proceeded constantly in the ratio of Coalescence—that is to say, *in that of Condensation*, or, again, of Heterogeneity.

Thus the two Principles Proper, *Attraction and Repulsion*—the Material and the Spiritual—accompany each other, in the strictest fellowship, forever. Thus *The Body and The Soul walk hand in hand.*

If now, in fancy, we select *any one* of the agglomerations considered as in their primary stages throughout the Universal sphere, and suppose this incipient agglomeration to be taking place at that point where the centre of our Sun exists—or rather where it *did* exist originally; for the Sun is perpetually shifting his position—we shall find ourselves met, and borne onward for a time at least, by the most magnificent of theories—by the Nebular Cosmogony of Laplace:—although "Cosmogony" is far too comprehensive a term for what he really discusses—which is the constitution of our solar system alone—of one among the myriad of similar systems which make up the Universe Proper—that Universal sphere—that all-inclusive and absolute *Kosmos* which forms the subject of my present Discourse.

Confining himself to an *obviously limited* region—that of our solar system with its comparatively immediate vicinity—and *merely* assuming—that is to say, assuming without any basis whatever, either deductive or inductive—*much* of what I have been just endeavoring to place upon a more stable basis than assumption; assuming, for

example, matter as diffused (without pretending to account for the diffusion) throughout, and somewhat beyond, the space occupied by our system—diffused in a state of heterogeneous nebulosity and obedient to that omniprevalent law of Gravity at whose principle he ventured to make no guess,—assuming all this (which is quite true, although he had no logical right to its assumption) Laplace has shown, dynamically and mathematically, that the results in such case necessarily ensuing, are those and those alone which we find manifested in the actually existing condition of the system itself.

To explain :—Let us conceive *that* particular agglomeration of which we have just spoken—the one at the point designated by our Sun's centre—to have so far proceeded that a vast quantity of nebulous matter has here assumed a roughly globular form ; its centre being, of course, coincident with what is now, or rather was originally, the centre of our Sun ; and its periphery extending out beyond the orbit of Neptune, the most remote of our planets :—in other words, let us suppose the diameter of this rough sphere to be some 6000 millions of miles. For ages, this mass of matter has been undergoing condensation, until at length it has become reduced into the bulk we imagine ; having proceeded gradually, of course, from its atomic and imperceptible state, into what we understand of visible, palpable, or otherwise appreciable nebulosity.

Now, the condition of this mass implies a rotation about

an imaginary axis—a rotation which, commencing with the absolute incipiency of the aggregation, has been ever since acquiring velocity. The very first two atoms which met, approaching each other from points not diametrically opposite, would, in rushing partially past each other, form a nucleus for the rotary movement described. How this would increase in velocity is readily seen. The two atoms are joined by others:—an aggregation is formed. The mass continues to rotate while condensing. But any atom at the circumference has, of course, a more rapid motion than one nearer the centre. The outer atom, however, with its superior velocity, approaches the centre; carrying this superior velocity with it as it goes. Thus every atom, proceeding inwardly, and finally attaching itself to the condensed centre, adds something to the original velocity of that centre—that is to say, increases the rotary movement of the mass.

Let us now suppose this mass so far condensed that it occupies *precisely* the space circumscribed by the orbit of Neptune, and that the velocity with which the surface of the mass moves, in the general rotation, is precisely that velocity with which Neptune now revolves about the Sun. At this epoch, then, we are to understand that the constantly increasing centrifugal force, having gotten the better of the non-increasing centripetal, loosened and separated the exterior and least condensed strata, at the equator of the sphere, where the tangential velocity predominated; so that these strata formed about the main body an inde-

pendent ring encircling the equatorial regions:—just as the exterior portion thrown off by excessive velocity of rotation, from a grindstone, would form a ring about the grindstone, but for the solidity of the superficial material; were this caoutchouc, or any thing similar in consistency, precisely the phenomenon I describe would be presented.

The ring thus whirled from the neulous mass, *revolved*, of course, *as* a separate ring, with just that velocity with which, while the surface of the mass, it *rotated*. In the meantime, condensation still proceeding, the interval between the discharged ring and the main body continued to increase, until the former was left at a vast distance from the latter.

Now, admitting the ring to have possessed, by some seemingly accidental arrangement of its heterogeneous materials, a constitution nearly uniform, then this ring, *as* such, would never have ceased revolving about its primary; but, as might have been anticipated, there appears to have been enough irregularity in the disposition of the materials to make them cluster about centres of superior solidity; and thus the annular form was destroyed.* No doubt the band was soon broken up into several portions, and one of these portions, predominating in mass, absorbed the others into itself; the whole settling, spheri-

* Laplace assumes his nebulosity heterogeneous, merely that he might be thus enabled to account for the breaking up of the rings; for had the nebulosity been homogeneous, they would not have broken. I reach the same result—heterogeneity of the secondary masses immedietely resulting from the atoms—purely from an *a priori* consideration of their general design—*Relation.*

cally, into a planet. That this latter, *as* a planet, continued the revolutionary movement which characterized it while a ring, is sufficiently clear; and that it took upon itself, also, an additional movement, in its new condition of sphere, is readily explained. The ring being understood as yet unbroken, we see that its exterior, while the whole revolves about the parent body, moves more rapidly than its interior. When the rupture occurred, then, some portion in each fragment must have been moving with greater velocity than the others. The superior movement prevailing must have whirled each fragment round—that is to say, have caused it to rotate; and the direction of the rotation must, of course, have been the direction of the revolution whence it arose. *All* the fragments having become subject to the rotation described, must, in coalescing, have imparted it to the one planet constituted by their coalescence. This planet was Neptune. Its material continuing to undergo condensation, and the centrifugal force generated in its rotation, getting, at length, the better of the centripetal, as before in the case of the parent orb, a ring was whirled also from the equatorial surface of this planet: this ring, having been uniform in its constitution, was broken up, and its several fragments, being absorbed by the most massive, were collectively spherified into a moon. Subsequently the operation was repeated, and a second moon was the result. We thus account for the planet Neptune, with the two satellites which accompany him.

In throwing off a ring from its equator, the Sun re-established that equilibrium between its centripetal and centrifugal forces which had been disturbed in the process of condensation ; but, as this condensation still proceeded, the equilibrium was again immediately disturbed, through the increase of rotation. By the time the mass had so far shrunk that it occupied a spherical space just that circumscribed by the orbit of Uranus, we are to understand that the centrifugal force had so far obtained the ascendancy that new relief was needed : a second equatorial band was, consequently, thrown off, which, proving ununiform, was broken up, as before in the case of Neptune ; the fragments settling into the planet Uranus ; the velocity of whose actual revolution about the Sun indicates, of course, the rotary speed of that Sun's equatorial surface at the moment of the separation. Uranus, adopting a rotation from the collective rotations of the fragments composing it, as previously explained, now threw off ring after ring ; each of which, becoming broken up, settled into a moon :— three moons, at different epochs, having been formed, in this manner, by the rupture and general spherification of as many distinct ununiform rings.

By the time the Sun had shrunk until it occupied a space just that circumscribed by the orbit of Saturn, the balance, we are to suppose, between its centripetal and centrifugal forces had again become so far disturbed, through increase of rotary velocity, the result of condensation, that a third effort at equilibrium became necessary ;

and an annular band was therefore whirled off, as twice before; which, on rupture through ununiformity, became consolidated into the planet Saturn. This latter threw off, in the first place, seven uniform bands, which, on rupture, were spherified respectively into as many moons; but, subsequently, it appears to have discharged, at three distinct but not very distant epochs, three rings whose equability of constitution was, by apparent accident, so considerable as to present no occasion for their rupture; thus they continue to revolve as rings. I use the phrase "*apparent* accident"; for of accident in the ordinary sense there was, of course, nothing:—the term is properly applied only to the result of indistinguishable or not immediate traceable *law*.

Shrinking still farther, until it occupied just the space circumscribed by the orbit of Jupiter, the Sun now found need of farther effort to restore the counterbalance of its two forces, continually disarranged in the still continued increase of rotation. Jupiter, accordingly, was now thrown off; passing from the annular to the planetary condition; and, on attaining this latter, threw off in its turn, at four different epochs, four rings, which finally resolved themselves into so many moons.

Still shrinking, until its sphere occupied just the space defined by the orbit of the Asteroids, the Sun now discarded a ring which appears to have had *eight* centres of superior solidity, and, on breaking up, to have separated into eight fragments, no one of which, so far predominated

in mass as to absorb the others. All, therefore, as distinct although comparatively small planets, proceeded to revolve in orbits whose distances, each from each, may be considered as in some degree the measure of the force which drove them asunder:—all the orbits, nevertheless, being so closely coincident as to admit of our calling them *one*, in view of the other planetary orbits.

Continuing to shrink, the Sun, on becoming so small as just to fill the orbit of Mars, now discharged this planet—of course by the process repeatedly described. Having no moon, however, Mars could have thrown off no ring. In fact, an epoch had now arrived in the career of the parent body, the centre of the system. The *de*crease of its nebulosity, which is the *in*crease of its density, and which again is the *de*crease of its condensation, out of which latter arose the constant disturbance of equilibrium—must, by this period, have attained a point at which the efforts for restoration would have been more and more ineffectual just in proportion as they were less frequently needed. Thus the processes of which we have been speaking would everywhere show signs of exhaustion—in the planets, first, and secondly, in the original mass. We must not fall into the error of supposing the decrease of interval observed among the planets as we approach the Sun, to be in any respect indicative of an increase of frequency in the periods at which they were discarded. Exactly the converse is to be understood. The longest interval of time must have occurred between the dis-

charges of the two interior; the shortest, between those of the two exterior, planets. The decrease of the interval of space is, nevertheless, the measure of the density, and thus inversely of the condensation, of the Sun, throughout the processes detailed.

Having shrunk, however, so far as to fill only the orbit of our Earth, the parent sphere whirled from itself still one other body—the Earth—in a condition so nebulous as to admit of this body's discarding, in its turn, yet another, which is our moon;—but here terminated the lunar formations.

Finally, subsiding to the orbits first of Venus and then of Mercury, the Sun discarded these two interior planets; neither of which has given birth to any moon.

Thus from his original bulk—or, to speak more accurately, from the condition in which we first considered him—from a partially spherified nebular mass, *certainly* much more than 5,600 millions of miles in diameter—the great central orb and origin of our solar-planetary-lunar system, has gradually descended, by condensation, in obedience to the law of Gravity, to a globe only 882,000 miles in diameter; but it by no means follows, either that its condensation is yet complete, or that it may not still possess the capacity of whirling from itself another planet.

I have here given—in outline of course, but still with all the detail necessary for distinctness—a view of the Nebular Theory as its author himself conceived it. From whatever point we regard it, we shall find it *beautifully*

true. It is by far too beautiful, indeed, *not* to possess Truth as its essentiality—and here I am very profoundly serious in what I say. In the revolution of the satellites of Uranus, there does appear something seemingly inconsistent with the assumptions of Laplace; but that *one* inconsistency can invalidate a theory constructed from a million of intricate consistencies, is a fancy fit only for the fantastic. In prophesying, confidently, that the apparent anomaly to which I refer, will, sooner or later, be found one of the strongest possible corroborations of the general hypothesis, I pretend to no especial spirit of divination. It is a matter which the only difficulty seems *not* to foresee.*

The bodies whirled off in the processes described, would exchange, it has been seen, the superficial *rotation* of the orbs whence they originated, for a *revolution* of equal velocity about these orbs as distant centres; and the revolution thus engendered must proceed, so long as the centripetal force, or that with which the discarded body gravitates toward its parent, is neither greater nor less than that by which it was discarded; that is, than the centrifugal, or, far more properly, than the tangential, velocity. From the unity, however, of the origin of these two forces, we might have expected to find them as they are found—the one accurately counterbalancing the other. It has been shown, indeed, that the act of whirling-off is,

* I am prepared to show that the anomalous revolution of the satellites of Uranus is a simply perspective anomaly arising from the inclination of the axis of the planet

in every case, merely an act for the preservation of the counterbalance.

After referring, however, the centripetal force to the omniprevalent law of Gravity, it has been the fashion with astronomical treatises, to seek beyond the limits of mere nature—that is to say, of *Secondary* Cause—a solution of the phenomenon of tangential velocity. This latter they attribute directly to a *First* Cause—to God. The force which carries a stellar body around its primary they assert to have originated in an impulse given immediately by the finger—this is the childish phraseology employed—by the finger of Deity itself. In this view, the planets, fully formed, are conceived to have been hurled from the Divine hand, to a position in the vicinity of the suns, with an impetus mathematically adapted to the masses, or attractive capacities, of the suns themselves. An idea so grossly unphilosophical, although so supinely adopted, could have arisen only from the difficulty of otherwise accounting for the absolutely accurate adaptation, each to each, of two forces so seemingly independent, one of the other, as are the gravitating and tangential. But it should be remembered that, for a long time, the coincidence between the moon's rotation and her sidereal revolution—two matters seemingly far more independent than those now considered—was looked upon as positively miraculous; and there was a strong disposition, even among astronomers, to attribute the marvel to the direct and continual agency of God—who, in this case, it

was said, had found it necessary to interpose, specially, among his general laws, a set of subsidiary regulations, for the purpose of forever concealing from mortal eyes the glories, or perhaps the horrors, of the other side of the Moon—of that mysterious hemisphere which has always avoided, and must perpetually avoid, the telescopic scrutiny of mankind. The advance of Science, however, soon demonstrated—what to the philosophical instinct needed no demonstration—that the one movement is but a portion—something more, even, than a consequence—of the other.

For my part, I have no patience with fantasies at once so timorous, so idle, and so awkward. They belong to the veriest *cowardice* of thought. That Nature and the God of Nature are distinct, no thinking being can long doubt. By the former we imply merely the laws of the latter. But with the very idea of God, omnipotent, omniscient, we entertain, also, the idea of *the infallibility* of his laws. With Him there being neither Past nor Future—with him all being *Now*—do we not insult him in supposing his law, so contrived as not to provide for every possible contingency?—or, rather, what idea *can* we have of *any* possible contingency, except that it is at once a result and a manifestation of his laws? He who, divesting himself of prejudice, shall have the rare courage to think absolutely for himself, cannot fail to arrive, in the end, at the condensation *laws* into *Law*—cannot fail of reaching the conclusion that *each law of Nature is dependent at all*

points upon all other laws, and that all are but consequences of one primary exercise of the Divine Volition. Such is the principle of the Cosmogony which, with all necessary deference, I here venture to suggest and to maintain.

In this view, it will be seen that, dismissing as frivolous, and even impious, the fancy of the tangential force having been imparted to the planets immediately by "the finger of God," I consider this force as originating in the rotation of the stars:—this rotation as brought about by the in-rushing of the primary atoms, toward their respective centres of agregation:—this in-rushing as the consequence of the law of Gravity:—this law as but the mode in which is necessarily manifested the tendency of the atoms to return into imparticularity:—this tendency to return as but the inevitable reaction of the first and most sublime of Acts—that act by which a God, self-existing and alone existing, became all things at once, through dint of his volition, while all things were thus constituted a portion of God.

The radical assumptions of this Discourse suggest to me, and in fact imply, certain important *modifications* of the Nebular Theory as given by Laplace. The efforts of the repulsive power I have considered as made for the purpose of preventing contact among the atoms, and thus as made in the ratio of the approach to contact—that is to say, in the ratio of condensation.* In other words

*See page 70.

Electricity, with its involute phenomena, heat, light, and magnetism, is to be understood as proceeding as condensation proceeds, and, of course, inversely, as destiny proceeds, or the *cessation to condense.* Thus the Sun, in the process of its aggregation, must soon, in developing repulsion, have become excessively heated—perhaps incandescent: and we can perceive how the operation of discarding its rings must have been materially assisted by the slight incrustation of its surface consequent on cooling. Any common experiment shows us how readily a crust of the character suggested, is separated, through heterogeneity, from the interior mass. But, on every successive rejection of the crust, the new surface would appear incandescent as before; and the period at which it would again become so far incrusted as to be readily loosened and discharged, may well be imagined as exactly coincident with that at which a new effort would be needed, by the whole mass, to restore the equilibrium of the two forces, disarranged through condensation. In other words: —by the time the electric influence (Repulsion) has prepared the surface for rejection, we are to understand that the gravitating influence (Attraction) is precisely ready to reject it. Here, then, as everywhere, *the Body and the Soul walk hand in hand.*

These ideas are empirically confirmed at all points. Since condensation can never, in any body, be considered as absolutely at an end, we are warranted in anticipating that whenever we have an opportunity of testing the matter,

we shall find indications of resident luminosity in *all* the stellar bodies—moons and planets as well as suns. That our Moon is strongly self-luminous, we see at every total eclipse, when, if not so, she would disappear. On the dark part of the satellite, too, during her phases, we often observe flashes like our own Auroras; and that these latter, with our various other so-called electrical phenomena, without reference to any more steady radiance, must give our Earth a certain appearance of luminosity to an inhabitant of the Moon, is quite evident. In fact, we should regard all the phenomena referred to as mere manifestations, in different moods and degrees, of the Earth's feebly continued condensation.

If my views are tenable, we should be prepared to find the newer planets—that is to say, those nearer the Sun—more luminous than those older and more remote:—and the extreme brilliancy of Venus (on whose dark portions, during her phases, the Auroras are frequently visible) does not seem to be altogether accounted for by her proximity to the central orb. She is no doubt vividly self-luminous, although less so than Mercury; while the luminosity of Neptune may be comparatively nothing.

Admitting what I have urged, it is clear that, from the moment of the Sun's discarding a ring, there must be a continuous diminution both of his heat and light, on account of the continuous incrustation of his surface; and that a period would arrive—the period immediately previous to a new discharge—when a *very material* decrease of both light

and heat must become apparent. Now, we know that tokens of such changes are distinctly recognizable. On the Melville Islands—to adduce merely one out of a hundred examples—we find traces of *ultra-tropical* vegetation —of plants that never could have flourished without immensely more light and heat than are at present afforded by our Sun to any portion of the surface of the Earth. Is such vegetation referable to an epoch immediately subsequent to the whirling-off of Venus? At this epoch must have occurred to us our greatest access of solar influence; and, in fact, this influence must then have attained its maximum :—leaving out of view, of course, the period when the Earth itself was discarded—the period of its mere organization.

Again: we know that there exist *non-luminous suns*—that is to say, suns whose existence we determine through the movements of others, but whose luminosity is not sufficient to impress us. Are these suns invisible merely on account of the length of time elapsed since their discharge of a planet? And yet again :—may we not—at least in certain cases—account for the sudden appearances of suns where none had been previously suspected, by the hypothesis that, having rolled with incrusted surfaces throughout a few thousand years of our astronomical history, each of these suns, in whirling off a new secondary, has at length been enabled to display the glories of its still incandescent interior? To the well-ascertained fact of the proportional increase of heat as we descend into

the Earth, I need of course do nothing more than refer; it comes in the strongest possible corroboration of all that I have said on the topic now at issue.

In speaking, not long ago, of the repulsive or electrical influence, I remarked that "the important phenomena of vitality, consciousness, and thought, whether we observe them generally or in detail, seem to proceed *at least in the ratio of the heterogeneous.*"* I mentioned, too, that I would recur to the suggestion, and this is the proper point at which to do so. Looking at the matter first in detail, we perceive that not merely the *manifestation* of vitality, but its importance, consequences, and elevation of character, keep pace very closely with the heterogeneity or complexity of the animal structure. Looking at the question now in its generality, and referring to the first movements of the atoms toward mass-constitution, we find that heterogeneousness, brought about directly through condensation, is proportional with it for ever. We thus reach the proposition that *the importance of the development of the terrestrial vitality proceeds equably with the terrestrial condensation.*

Now this is in precise accordance with what we know of the succession of animals on the Earth. As it has proceeded in its condensation, superior and still superior races have appeared. Is it impossible that the successive geological revolutions which have attended, at least, if not immediately caused, these successive elevations of

* Page 34.

vitalic character—is it improbable that these revolutions have themselves been produced by the successive planetary discharges from the Sun—in other words, by the successive variations in the solar influence on the Earth? Were this idea tenable, we should not be unwarranted in the fancy that the discharge of yet a new planet, interior to Mercury, may give rise to yet a new modification of the terrestrial surface—a modification from which may spring a race both materially and spiritually superior to Man. These thoughts impress me with all the force of truth—but I throw them out, of course, merely in their obvious character of suggestion.

The Nebular Theory of Laplace has lately received far more confirmation than it needed, at the hands of the philosopher, Comte. These two have thus together shown —*not*, to be sure, that Matter at any period actually existed as described, in a state of nebular diffusion, but that, admitting it so to have existed through the space and much beyond the space now occupied by our solar system, *and to have commenced a movement toward a centre*—it must gradually have assumed the various forms and motions which are now seen, in that system, to obtain. A demonstration such as this—a dynamical and mathematical demonstration, as far as demonstration can be—unquestionable and unquestioned—unless, indeed, by that unprofitable and disreputable tribe, the professional questioners—the mere madmen who deny the Newtonian law of Gravity on which the results of the French mathematicians are

based—a demonstration, I say, such as this, would to most intellects be conclusive—and I confess that it is so to mine—of the validity of the nebular hypothesis upon which the demonstration depends.

That the demonstration does not *prove* the hypothesis, according to the common understanding of the word "proof," I admit, of course. To show that certain existing results—that certain established facts—may be, even mathematically, accounted for by the assumption of a certain hypothesis, is by no means to establish the hypothesis itself. In other words, to show that, certain data being given, a certain existing result might, or even *must*, have ensued, will fail to prove that this result *did* ensue, *from the data*, until such time as it shall be also shown that there are, *and can be*, no other data from which the result in question might *equally* have ensued. But, in the case now discussed, although all must admit the deficiency, of what we are in the habit of terming "proof," still there are many intellects, and those of the loftiest order, to which *no* proof could bring one iota of additional *conviction*. Without going into details which might impinge upon the Cloud-Land of Metaphysics, I may as well here observe, that the force of conviction, in cases such as this, will always, with the right-thinking, be proportional to the amount of *complexity* intervening between the hypothesis and the result. To be less abstract: The greatness of the complexity found existing among cosmical conditions, by rendering great in the same proportion the

difficulty of accounting for all these conditions, *at once*, strengthens, also in the same proportion, our faith in that hypothesis which does, in such manner, satisfactorily account for them; and as *no* complexity can well be conceived greater than that of the astronomical conditions, so no conviction can be stronger—to *my* mind at least—than that with which I am impressed by an hypothesis that not only reconciles these conditions, with mathematical accuracy, and reduces them into a consistent and intelligible whole, but is, at the same time, the *sole* hypothesis by means of which the human intellect has been ever enabled to account for them *at all*.

A most unfounded opinion has been latterly current in gossiping and even in scientific circles—the opinion that the so-called Nebular Cosmogony has been overthrown. This fancy has arisen from the report of late observations made, among what hitherto have been termed the "nebulæ," through the large telescope of Cincinnati, and the world-renowned instrument of Lord Rosse. Certain spots in the firmament which presented, even to the most powerful of the old telescopes, the appearance of nebulosity or haze, had been regarded for a long time as confirming the theory of Laplace. They were looked upon as stars in that very process of condensation which I have been attempting to describe. Thus it was supposed that we "had ocular evidence"—an evidence, by the way, which has always been found very questionable—of the truth of the hypothesis; and, although certain telescopic

improvements, every now and then, enabled us to perceive that a spot, here and there, which we had been classing among the nebulæ, was, in fact, but a cluster of stars deriving its nebular character only from its immensity of distance—still it was thought that no doubt could exist as to the actual nebulosity of numerous other masses, the strongholds of the nebulists, bidding defiance to every effort at segregation. Of these latter the most interesting was the great "nebula" in the constellation Orion; but this, with innumerable other miscalled "nebulæ," when viewed through the magnificent modern telescopes, has become resolved into a simple collection of stars. Now this fact has been very generally understood as conclusive against the Nebular Hypothesis of Laplace; and, on announcement of the discoveries in question, the most enthusiastic defender and most eloquent popularizer of the theory, Dr. Nichol, went so far as to "admit the necessity of abandoning" an idea which had formed the material of his most praiseworthy book.*

Many of my readers will no doubt be inclined to say that the result of these new investigations *has* at least a strong *tendency* to overthrow the hypothesis; while some

* "Views of the Architecture of the Heavens." A letter, purporting to be from Dr. Nichol to a friend in America, went the rounds of our newspapers, about two years ago, I think, admitting the "necessity" to which I refer. In a subsequent lecture, however, Dr. N. appears in some manner to have gotten the better of the necessity, and does not quite *renounce* the theory, although he seems to wish that he could sneer at it as "a purely hypothetical one." What else was the Law of Gravity before the Maskelyne experiments? and who questioned the Law of Gravity even then?

of them, more thoughtful, will suggest that, although the theory is by no means disproved through the segregation of the particular "nebulæ" alluded to, still a *failure* to segregate them, with such telescopes, might well have been understood as a triumphant *corroboration* of the theory: and this latter class will be surprised, perhaps, to hear me say that even with *them* I disagree. If the propositions of this Discourse have been comprehended, it will be seen that, in my view, a failure to segregate the "nebulæ" would have tended to the refutation, rather than to the confirmation, of the Nebular Hypothesis.

Let me explain:—The Newtonian Law of Gravity we may, of course, assume as demonstrated. This law, it will be remembered, I have referred to the reaction of the first Divine Act—to the reaction of an exercise of the Divine Volition temporarily overcoming a difficulty. This difficulty is that of forcing the normal into the abnormal—of impelling that whose originality, and therefore whose rightful condition, was *One*, to take upon itself the wrongful condition of *Many*. It is only by conceiving this difficulty as *temporarily* overcome, that we can comprehend a reaction. There could have been no reaction had the act been infinitely continued. So long as the act *lasted*, no reaction, of course, could commence, in other words, no *gravitation* could take place—for we have considered the one as but the manifestation of the other. But gravitation *has* taken place; therefore the act of Creation has ceased: and gravitation has long ago

taken place; therefore the act of Creation has long ago ceased. We can no more expect, then, to observe *the primary processes* of Creation; and to these primary processes the condition of nebulosity has already been explained to belong.

Through what we know of the propagation of light, we have direct proof that the more remote of the stars have existed, under the forms in which we now see them, for an inconceivable number of years. So far back *at least*, then, as the period when these stars underwent condensation, must have been the epoch at which the mass-constitutive processes began. That we may conceive these processes, then, as still going on in the case of certain "nebulæ," while in all other cases we find them thoroughly at an end, we are forced into assumptions for which we have really *no* basis whatever—we have to thrust in, again, upon the revolting Reason the blasphemous idea of special interposition—we have to suppose that, in the particular instances of these "nebulæ," an unerring God found it necessary to introduce certain supplementary regulations—certain improvements of the general law—certain re-touchings and emendations, in a word, which had the effect of deferring the completion of these individual stars for centuries of centuries beyond the area during which all the other stellar bodies had time, not only to be fully constituted, but to grow hoary with an unspeakable old age.

Of course it will be immediately objected that since the

light by which we recognize the nebulæ now must be merely that which left their surfaces a vast number of years ago, the processes at present observed, or supposed to be observed, are, in fact, *not* processes now actually going on, but the phantoms of processes completed long in the Past—just as I maintain all these mass-constitutive processes *must* have been.

To this I reply that neither is the now-observed condition of the condensed stars their actual condition, but a condition completed long in the Past; so that my argument drawn from the *relative* condition of the stars, and the "nebulæ," is in no manner disturbed. Moreover, those who maintain the existence of nebulæ, do *not* refer the nebulosity to extreme distance; they declare it a real and not merely a perspective nebulosity. That we may conceive, indeed, a nebular mass as visible at all, we must conceive it as *very near us* in comparison with the condensed stars brought into view by the modern telescopes. In maintaining the appearances in question, then, to be really nebulous, we maintain their comparative vicinity to our own point of view. Thus, their condition, as we see them now, must be referred to an epoch *far less remote* than that to which we may refer the now-observed condition of at least the majority of the stars. In a word, should Astronomy ever demonstrate a "nebula," in the sense at present intended, I should consider the Nebular Cosmogony—*not*, indeed, as corroborated by the demonstration—but as thereby irretrievably overthrown.

By way, however, of rendering unto Cæsar *no more* than the things that are Cæsar's, let me here remark that the assumption of the hypothesis which led him to so glorious a result, seems to have been suggested to Laplace in great measure by a misconception—by the very misconception of which we have just been speaking—by the generally prevalent misunderstanding of the character of the nebulæ, so mis-named. These he supposed to be, in reality, what their designation implies. The fact is, this great man had, very properly, an inferior faith in his own merely *perceptive* powers. In respect, therefore, to the actual existence of nebulæ—an existence so confidently maintained by his teloscopic contemporaries—he depended less upon what he saw than upon what he heard.

It will be seen that the only valid objections to his theory, are those made to its hypothesis *as* such; to what suggested it, not to what it suggests; to its propositions rather than to its results. His most unwarranted assumption was that of giving the atoms a movement toward a centre, in the very face of his evident understanding that these atoms, in unlimited succession, extended throughout the Universal space. I have already shown that, under such circumstances, there could have occurred no movement at all; and Laplace, consequently, assumed one on no more philosophical ground than that something of the kind was necessary for the establishment of what he intended to establish.

His original idea seems to have been a compound of the

true Epicurean atoms with the false nebulæ of his contemporaries; and thus his theory presents us with the singular anomaly of absolute truth deduced, as a mathematical result, from a hybrid datum of ancient imagination intertangled with modern inacumen. Laplace's real strength lay, in fact, in an almost miraculous mathematical instinct; on this he relied, and in no instance did it fail or deceive him:—in the case of the Nebular Cosmogony, it led him, blindfolded, through a labyrinth of Error, into one of the most luminous and stupendous temples of Truth.

Let us now fancy, for the moment, that the ring first thrown off by the Sun—that is to say, the ring whose breaking-up constituted Neptune—did not, in fact, break up until the throwing-off of the ring out of which Uranus arose; that this latter ring, again, remained perfect until the discharge of that out of which sprang Saturn; that this latter, again, remained entire until the discharge of that from which originated Jupiter—and so on. Let us imagine, in a word, that no dissolution occurred among the rings until the final rejection of that which gave birth to Mercury. We thus paint to the eye of the mind a series of co-existent concentric circles; and looking as well at *them* as at the processes by which, according to Laplace's hypothesis, they were constructed, we perceive at once a very singular analogy with the atomic strata and the process of the original irradiation as I have described it. Is it impossible that, on measuring the *forces*,

respectively, by which each successive planetary circle was thrown off—that is to say, on measuring the successive excesses of rotation over gravitation which occasioned the successive discharges—we should find the analogy in question more decidedly confirmed? *Is it improbable that we should discover these forces to have varied as—in the original radiation—proportionably to the squares of the distances?*

Our solar system, consisting, in chief, of one sun, with sixteen planets certainly, and possibly a few more, revolving about it at various distances, and attended by seventeen moons assuredly, but *very* probably by several others, is now to be considered as *an example* of the innumerable agglomerations which proceeded to take place throughout the Universal Sphere of atoms on withdrawal of the Divine Volition. I mean to say that our solar system is to be understood as affording a *generic instance* of these agglomerations, or, more correctly, of the ulterior conditions at which they arrived. If we keep our attention fixed on the idea of *the utmost possible Relation* as the omnipotent design, and on the precautions taken to accomplish it through difference of form, among the original atoms, and particular inequidistance, we shall find it impossible to supppose for a moment that even any two of the incipient agglomerations reached precisely the same result in the end. We shall rather be inclined to think that *no two* stellar bodies in the universe—whether suns, planets, or moons—are particularly, while *all* are generally,

similar. Still less, then, can we imagine any two *assemblages* of such bodies—any two "systems"—as having more than a general resemblance.* Our telescopes, at this point, thoroughly confirm our deductions. Taking our own solar system, then, as merely a loose or general type of all, we have so far proceeded in our subject as to survey the Universe under the aspect of a spherical space, throughout which, dispersed with merely general equability, exist a number of but generally similar *systems*.

Let us now, expanding our conceptions, look upon each of these systems as in itself an atom; which in fact it is, when we consider it as but one of the countless myriads of systems which constitute the Universe. Regarding all, then, as but colossal atoms, each with the same ineradicable tendency to Unity which characterizes the actual atoms of which it consists—we enter at once upon a new order of aggregations. The smaller systems, in the vicinity of a larger one, would, inevitably, be drawn into still closer vicinity. A thousand would assemble here; a million there—perhaps here, again, even a billion—leaving thus, immeasurable vacancies in space. And if, now, it be demanded why, in the case of these systems—of these merely Titanic atoms—I speak, simply, of an "assemblage," and not, as in the case of the actual atoms, of a

* It is not *impossible* that some unlooked-for optical improvement may disclose to us, among innumerable varieties of systems, a luminous sun, encircled by luminous and non-luminous rings, within and without, and between which, revolve luminous and non-luminous planets, attended by moons having moons—and even these latter again having moons.

more or less consolidated agglomeration;—if it be asked, for instance, why I do not carry what I suggest to its legitimate conclusion, and describe, at once, these assemblages of system-atoms as rushing to consolidation in spheres—as each becoming condensed into one magnificent sun,—my reply is that *μελλοντα ταυτα*—I am but pausing, for a moment, on the awful threshold of *the Future*. For the present, calling these assemblages "clusters," we see them in the incipient stages of their consolidation. Their *absolute* consolidation is *to come*.

We have now reached a point from which we behold the Universe as a spherical space, interspersed, *unequably*, with *clusters*. It will be noticed that I here prefer the adverb "unequably" to the phrase "with a merely general equability," employed before. It is evident, in fact, that the equability of distribution will diminish in the ratio of the agglomerative processes—that is to say, as the things distributed diminish in number. Thus the increase of *in*equability—an increase which must continue until, sooner or later, an epoch will arrive at which the largest agglomeration will absorb all the others—should be viewed as simply a corroborative indication of the *tendency to One*.

And here, at length, it seems proper to inquire whether the ascertained *facts* of Astronomy confirm the general arrangement which I have thus, deductively, assigned to the Heavens. Thoroughly, they *do*. Telescopic observation, guided by the laws of perspective, enables us to un-

derstand that the perceptible Universe exists as *a cluster of clusters, irregularly disposed.*

The "clusters" of which this Universal "*cluster of clusters*" consists, are merely what we have been in the practice of designating "nebulæ" — and, of these "nebulæ," *one* is of paramount interest to mankind. I allude to the Galaxy, or Milky Way. This interests us, first and most obviously, on account of its great superiority in apparent size, not only to any one other cluster in the firmament, but to all the other clusters taken together. The largest of these latter occupies a mere point, comparatively, and is distinctly seen only with the aid of a telescope. The Galaxy sweeps throughout the Heaven and is brilliantly visible to the naked eye. But it interests man chiefly, although less immediately, on account of its being his home; the home of the Earth on which he exists; the home of the Sun about which this Earth revolves; the home of that "system" of orbs of which the Sun is the centre and primary—the Earth one of sixteen secondaries, or planets—the Moon one of seventeen tertiaries, or satellites. The Galaxy, let me repeat, is but one of the *clusters* which I have been describing—but one of the mis-called "nebulæ" revealed to us—by the telescope alone, sometimes—as faint hazy spots in various quarters of the sky. We have no reason to suppose the Milky Way *really* more extensive than the least of these "nebulæ." Its vast superiority in size is but an apparent superiority arising from our position in regard to it—that

is to say, from our position in its midst. However strange the assertion may at first appear to those unversed in Astronomy, still the astronomer himself has no hesitation in asserting that we are *in the midst* of that inconceivable host of stars—of suns—of systems—which constitute the Galaxy. Moreover, not only have *we*—not only has *our* Sun a right to claim the Galaxy as its own special cluster, but, with slight reservation, it may be said that all the distinctly visible stars of the firmament—all the stars visible to the naked eye—have equally a right to claim it as *their* own.

There has been a great deal of misconception in respect to the *shape* of the Galaxy; which, in nearly all our astronomical treatises, is said to resemble that of a capital Y. The cluster in question has, in reality, a certain general, *very* general resemblance to the planet Saturn, with its encompassing triple ring. Instead of the solid orb of that planet, however, we must picture to ourselves a lenticular star-island, or collection of stars; our Sun lying eccentrically—near the shore of the island—on that side of it which is nearest the constellation of the Cross and farthest from that of Cassiopeia. The surrounding ring, where it approaches our position, has in it a longitudinal *gash*, which does, in fact, cause *the ring, in our vicinity*, to assume, loosely, the appearance of a capital Y.

We must not fall into the error, however, of conceiving the somewhat indefinite girdle as at all *remote*, compara-

tively speaking, from the also indefinite lenticular cluster which it surrounds; and thus, for mere purpose of explanation, we may speak of our Sun as actually situated at that point of the Y where its three component lines unite; and, conceiving this letter to be of a certain solidity —of a certain thickness, very trivial in comparison with its length—we may even speak of our position as *in the middle* of this thickness. Fancying ourselves thus placed, we shall no longer find difficulty in accounting for the phænomena presented—which are perspective altogether. When we look upward or downward—that is to say, when we cast our eyes in the direction of the letter's *thickness* —we look through fewer stars than when we cast them in the direction of its *length*, or *along* either of the three component lines. Of course, in the former case, the stars appear scattered—in the latter, crowded. To reverse this explanation:—An inhabitant of the Earth, when looking, as we commonly express ourselves, *at* the Galaxy, is then beholding it in some of the directions of its length—is looking *along* the lines of the Y—but when, looking out into the general Heaven, he turns his eyes *from* the Galaxy, he is then surveying it in the direction of the latter's thickness; and on this account the stars seem to him scattered; while, in fact they are as close together, on an average, as in the mass of the cluster. *No* consideration could be better adapted to convey an idea of this cluster's stupendous extent.

If with a telescope of high space-penetrating power, we

carefully inspect the firmament, we shall become aware of *a belt of clusters*—of what we have hitherto called "nebulæ,"—a *band*, of varying breadth, stretching from horizon to horizon, at right angles to the general course of the Milky Way. This band is the ultimate *cluster of clusters*. This belt is *The Universe*. Our Galaxy is but one, and perhaps one of the most inconsiderable, of the clusters which go to the constitution of this ultimate, Universal *belt* or *band*. The appearance of this cluster of clusters, to our eyes, *as* a belt or band, is altogether a perspective phenomenon of the same character as that which causes us to behold our own individual and roughly-spherical cluster, the Galaxy, under guise also of a belt, traversing the Heavens at right angles to the Universal one. The shape of the all-inclusive cluster is, of course *generally*, that of each individual cluster which it includes. Just as the scattered stars which, on looking *from* the Galaxy, we see in the general sky, are, in fact, but a portion of that Galaxy itself, and as closely intermingled with it as any of the telescopic points in what seems the densest portion of its mass, so are the scattered "nebulæ" which, on casting our eyes *from* the Universal *belt*, we perceive at all points of the firmament—so, I say, are these scattered "nebulæ" to be understood as only perspectively scattered, and as part and parcel of the one supreme and Universal *sphere*.

No astronomical fallacy is more untenable, and none has been more pertinaciously adhered to, than that of the

absolute *illimitation* of the Universe of Stars. The reasons for limitation, as I have already assigned them, *a priori*, seem to me unanswerable; but, not to speak of these, *observation* assures us that there is, in numerous directions around us, certainly, if not in all, a positive limit—or, at the very least, affords us no basis whatever for thinking otherwise. Were the succession of stars endless, then the background of the sky would present us an uniform luminosity, like that displayed by the Galaxy—*since there could be absolutely no point, in all that background, at which would not exist a star.* The only mode, therefore, in which, under such a state of affairs, we could comprehend the *voids* which our telescopes find in innumerable directions, would be by supposing the distance of the invisible background so immense that no ray from it has yet been able to reach us at all. That this *may* be so, who shall venture to deny? I maintain, simply, that we have not even the shadow of a reason for believing that it *is* so.

When speaking of the vulgar propensity to regard all bodies on the Earth as tending merely to the Earth's centre, I observed that, "with certain exceptions to be specified hereafter, every body on the Earth tended not only to the Earth's centre, but in every conceivable direction besides."* The "exceptions" refer to those frequent gaps in the Heavens, where our utmost scrutiny can detect not only no stellar bodies, but no indications of

* Page 38.

their existence:—where yawning chasms, blacker than Erebus, seem to afford us glimpses, through the boundary walls of the Universe of Stars, into the illimitable Universe of Vacancy, beyond. Now as any body, existing on the Earth, chances to pass, either through its own movement or the Earth's, into a line with any one of these voids, or cosmical abysses, it clearly is no longer attracted *in the direction of that void*, and for the moment, consequently, is "heavier" than at any period, either after or before. Independently of the consideration of these voids, however, and looking only at the generally unequable distribution of the stars, we see that the absolute tendency of bodies on the Earth to the Earth's centre, is in a state of perpetual variation.

We comprehend, then, the insulation of our Universe. We perceive the isolation of *that*—of *all* that which we grasp with the senses. We know that there exists one *cluster of clusters*—a collection around which, on all sides, extend the immeasurable wilderness of a Space *to all human perception* untenanted. But *because* upon the confines of this Universe of Stars we are compelled to pause, through want of further evidence from the senses, is it right to conclude that, in fact, there *is* no material point beyond that which we have thus been permitted to attain? Have we, or have we not, an analogical right to the inference that this perceptible Universe—that this cluster of clusters—is but one of *a series* of clusters of clusters, the rest of which are invisible through distance, through the

diffusion of their light being so excessive, ere it reaches us, as not to produce upon our retinas a light-impression —or from there being no such emanation as light at all, in these unspeakably distant worlds—or, lastly, from the mere interval being so vast, that the electric tidings of their presence in Space have not yet—through the lapsing myriads of years—been enabled to traverse that interval?

Have we any right to inferences—have we any ground whatever for visions such as these? If we have a right to them in *any* degree, we have a right to their infinite extension.

The human brain has obviously a leaning to the "*Infinite*," and fondles the phantom of the idea. It seems to long with a passionate fervor for this impossible conception, with the hope of intellectually believing it when conceived. What is general among the whole race of Man, of course no individual of that race can be warranted in considering abnormal; nevertheless, there *may* be a class of superior intelligences, to whom the human bias alluded to may wear all the character of monomania.

My question, however, remains unanswered:—Have we any right to infer—let us say, rather, to imagine—an interminable succession of the "clusters of clusters," or of "Universes" more or less similar?

I reply that the "right," in a case such as this, depends absolutely upon the hardihood of that imagination which

ventures to claim the right. Let me declare, only, that, as an individual, I myself feel impelled to *fancy*—without daring to call it more—that there *does* exist a *limitless* succession of Universes, more or less similar to that of which we have cognizance—to that of which *alone* we shall ever have cognizance—at the very least until the return of our own particular Universe into Unity. *If* such clusters of clusters exist, however—*and they do*—it is abundantly clear that, having had no part in our origin, they have no portion in our laws. They neither attract us, nor we them. Their material—their spirit is not ours—is not that which obtains in any part of our Universe. They could not impress our senses or our souls. Among them and us—considering all, for the moment, collectively—there are no influences in common. Each exists, apart and independently, *in the bosom of its proper and particular God.*

In the conduct of this Discourse, I am aiming less at physical than metaphysical order. The clearness with which even material phenomena are presented to the understanding, depends very little, I have long since learned to perceive, upon a merely natural, and almost altogether upon a moral, arrangement. If, then, I seem to step somewhat too discursively from point to point of my topic, let me suggest that I do so in the hope of thus the better keeping unbroken that chain of *graduated impression* by which alone the intellect of Man can expect to encompass the grandeurs of which I speak, and, in their majestic totality, to comprehend them.

So far, our attention has been directed, almost exclusively, to a general and relative grouping of the stellar bodies in space. Of specification there has been little; and whatever ideas of *quantity* have been conveyed—that is to say, of number, magnitude, and distance—have been conveyed incidentally and by way of preparation for more definite conceptions. These latter let us now attempt to entertain.

Our solar system, as has been already mentioned, consists, in chief, of one sun and sixteen planets certainly, but in all probability a few others, revolving around it as a centre, and attended by seventeen moons of which we know, with possibly several more of which as yet we know nothing. These various bodies are not true spheres, but oblate spheroids—spheres flattened at the poles of the imaginary axes about which they rotate,—the flattening being a consequence of the rotation. Neither is the Sun absolutely the centre of the system; for this Sun itself, with all the planets, revolves about a perpetually shifting point of space, which is the system's general centre of gravity. Neither are we to consider the paths through which these different spheroids move—the moons about the planets, the planets about the Sun, or the Sun about the common centre—as circles in an accurate sense. They are, in fact, *ellipses—one of the foci being the point about which the revolution is made.* An ellipse is a curve, returning into itself, one of whose diameters is longer than the other. In the longer diameter are two

points, equidistant from the middle of the line, and so situated otherwise that if, from each of them a straight line be drawn to any one point of the curve, the two lines, taken together, will be equal to the long diameter itself. Now let us conceive such an ellipse. At one of the points mentioned, which are the *foci*, let us fasten an orange. By an elastic thread let us connect this orange with a pea; and let us place this latter on the circumference of the ellipse. Let us now move the pea continuously around the orange—keeping always on the circumference of the ellipse. The elastic thread, which, of course, varies in length as we move the pea, will form what in geometry is called a *radius vector*. Now, if the orange be understood as the Sun, and the pea as a planet revolving about it, then the revolution should be made at such a rate —with a velocity so varying—that the *radius vector* may pass over *equal areas of space in equal times*. The progress of the pea *should be*—in other words, the progress of the planet *is*, of course,—slow in proportion to its distance from the Sun—swift in proportion to its proximity. Those planets, moreover, move the more slowly which are the farther from the Sun; *the squares of their periods of revolution having the same proportion to each other, as have to each other the cubes of their mean distances from the Sun.*

The wonderfully complex laws of revolution here described, however, are not to be understood as obtaining in our system alone. They *everywhere* prevail where At-

traction prevails. They control *the Universe*. Every shining speck in the firmament is, no doubt, a luminous Sun, resembling our own, at least in its general features, and having in attendance upon it a greater or less number of planets, greater or less, whose still lingering luminosity is not sufficient to render them visible to us at so vast a distance, but which nevertheless, revolve, moon-attended, about their starry centres, in obedience to the principles just detailed—in obedience to the three omniprevalent laws of revolution—the three immortal laws *guessed* by the imaginative Kepler, and but subsequently demonstrated and accounted for by the patient and mathematical Newton. Among a tribe of philosophers who pride themselves excessively upon matter-of-fact, it is far too fashionable to sneer at all speculation under the comprehensive *sobriquet*, "guess-work." The point to be considered is, *who* guesses. In guessing with Plato, we spend our time to better purpose, now and then, than in harkening to a demonstration by Alcmæon.

In many works on Astronomy I find it distinctly stated that the laws of Kepler are *the basis* of the great principle, Gravitation. This idea must have arisen from the fact that the suggestion of these laws by Kepler, and his proving them *a posteriori* to have an actual existence, led Newton to account for them by the hypothesis of Gravitation, and, finally, to demonstrate them *a priori*, as necessary consequences of the hypothetical principle. Thus so far from the laws of Kepler being the basis of Gravity,

Gravity is the basis of these laws—as it is, indeed, of all the laws, of the material Universe which are not referable to Repulsion alone.

The mean distance of the Earth from the Moon—that is to say, from the heavenly body in our closest vicinity—is 237,000 miles. Mercury, the planet nearest the Sun, is distant from him 37 million miles. Venus, the next, revolves at a distance of 68 millions. The Earth, which comes next, at a distance of 95 millions. Mars, then at a distance of 144 millions. Now come the eight Asteroids (Ceres, Juno, Vesta, Pallas, Astræa, Flora, Iris, and Hebe) at an average distance of about 250 millions. Then we have Jupiter, distant 490 millions; then Saturn, 900 millions; then Uranus, 19 hundred millions; finally, Neptune, lately discovered, and revolving at a distance, say of 28 hundred millions. Leaving Neptune out of the account—of which as yet we know little accurately and which is, possibly, one of a system of Asteroids—it will be seen that, within certain limits, there exists an *order of interval* among the planets. Speaking loosely, we may say that each outer planet is twice as far from the Sun as is the next inner one. May not the *order* here mentioned—*may not the law of Bode—be deduced from consideration of the analogy suggested by me as having place between the solar discharge of rings and the mode of the atomic irradiation?*

The numbers hurriedly mentioned in this summary of distance, it is folly to attempt comprehending, unless in

the light of abstract arithmetical facts. They are not practically tangible ones. They convey no precise ideas. I have stated that Neptune, the planet farthest from the Sun revolves about him at a distance of 28 hundred millions of miles. So far good; I have stated a mathematical fact, and, without comprehending it in the least, we may put it to use—mathematically. But in mentioning, even, that the Moon revolves about the Earth at the comparatively trifling distance of 237,000 miles, I entertained no expectation of giving any one to understand —to know—to feel—how far from the Earth the Moon actually *is*. 237,000 *miles!* There are perhaps, few of my readers who have not crossed the Atlantic Ocean; yet how many of them have a distinct idea of even the 3,000 miles intervening between shore and shore? I doubt, indeed, whether the man lives who can force into his brain the most remote conception of the interval between one milestone and its next neighbor upon the turnpike. We are in some measure aided, however, in our consideration of distance, by combining this consideration with the kindred one of velocity. Sound passes through 1100 feet of space in a second of time. Now were it possible for an inhabitant of the Earth to see the flash of a cannon discharged in the Moon, and to hear the report, he would have to wait, after perceiving the former, more than thirteen entire days and nights before getting any intimation of the latter.

However feeble be the impression, even thus conveyed,

of the Moon's real distance from the Earth, it will, nevertheless, effect a good object in enabling us more clearly to see the futility of attempting to grasp such intervals as that of the 28 hundred millions of miles between our Sun and Neptune; or even that of the 95 millions between the Sun and the Earth we inhabit. A cannon-ball, flying at the greatest velocity with which such a ball has ever been known to fly, could not traverse the latter interval in less than 20 years; while for the former it would require 590.

Our Moon's real diameter is 2,160 miles; yet she is comparatively so trifling an object that it would take nearly 50 such orbs to compose one as great as the Earth.

The diameter of our own globe is 7,912 miles—but from the enunciation of these numbers what positive idea do we derive?

If we ascend an ordinary mountain and look around us from its summit, we behold a landscape stretching, say 40 miles, in every direction; forming a circle 250 miles in circumference; and including an area of 5,000 square miles. The extent of such a prospect, on account of the *successiveness* with which its portions necessarily present themselves to view, can be only very feebly and very partially appreciated:—yet the entire panorama would comprehend no more than one 40,000th part of the mere *surface* of our globe. Were this panorama, then, to be succeeded, after the lapse of an hour, by another of equal extent; this again by a third, after the lapse of an hour; this again by a fourth, after lapse of another hour—and so on, until the

scenery of the whole Earth were exhausted ; and were we to be engaged in examining these various panoramas for twelve hours of every day ; we should, nevertheless, be nine years and forty-eight days in completing the general survey.

But if the mere surface of the Earth eludes the grasp of the imagination, what are we to think of its cubical contents? It embraces a mass of matter equal in weight to at least two sextillions, two hundred quintillions of tons. Let us suppose it in a state of quiescence ; and now let us endeavor to conceive a mechanical force sufficient to set it in motion ! Not the strength of all the myriads of beings whom we may conclude to inhabit the planetary worlds of our system—not the combined physical strength of *all* these beings—even admitting all to be more powerful than man—would avail to stir the ponderous mass *a single inch* from its position.

What are we to understand, then, of the force which, under similar circumstances, would be required to move the *largest* of our planets, Jupiter? This is 86,000 miles in diameter, and would include within its periphery more than a thousand orbs of the magnitude of our own. Yet this stupendous body is actually flying around the sun at the rate of 29,000 miles an hour—that is to say, with a velocity forty times greater than that of a cannon-ball ! The thought of such a phenomenon cannot well be said to *startle* the mind—it palsies and appals it. Not unfrequently we task our imagination in picturing the capacities

of an angel. Let us fancy such a being at a distance of some hundred miles from Jupiter—a close eye-witness of this planet as it speeds on its annual revolution. Now *can* we, I demand, fashion for ourselves any conception so distinct of this ideal being's spiritual exaltation as *that* involved in the supposition that, even by this immeasurable mass of matter, whirled immediately before his eyes, with a velocity so unutterable, he—an angel—angelic though he be—is not at once struck into nothingness and overwhelmed.

At this point, however, it seems proper to suggest that, in fact, we have been speaking of comparative trifles. Our Sun—the central and controlling orb of the system to which Jupiter belongs—is not only greater than Jupiter, but greater by far than all the planets of the system taken together. This fact is an essential condition, indeed, of the stability of the system itself. The diameter of Jupiter has been mentioned; it is 86,000 miles:—that of the Sun is 882,000 miles. An inhabitant of the latter, travelling ninety miles a day, would be more than eighty years in going round a great circle of its circumference. It occupies a cubical space of 681 quadrillions, 472 trillions of miles. The Moon, as has been stated, revolves about the Earth at a distance of 237,000 miles—in an orbit, consequently, of nearly a million and a half. Now, were the Sun placed upon the Earth, centre over centre, the body of the former would extend, in every direction, not only to the line of the Moon's orbit, but beyond it, a distance of 200,000 miles.

And here, once again, let me suggest that, in fact, we have *still* been speaking of comparative trifles. The distance of the planet Neptune from the Sun has been stated; it is 28 hundred millions of miles; the circumference of its orbit, therefore, is about 17 billions. Let this be borne in mind while we glance at some one of the brightest stars. Between this and the star of *our* system (the Sun), there is a gulf of space, to convey any idea of which, we should need the tongue of an archangel. From *our* system, then, and from *our* Sun, or star, the star at which we suppose ourselves glancing is a thing altogether apart:—still, for the moment, let us imagine it placed upon our Sun, centre over centre, as we just now imagined this Sun itself placed upon the Earth. Let us now conceive the particular star we have in mind, extending, in every direction, beyond the orbit of Mercury—of Venus—of the Earth:—still *on*, beyond the orbit of Mars—of Jupiter—of Uranus—until, finally, we fancy it filling the circle—*seventeen billions of miles in circumference*—which is described by the revolution of Leverrier's planet. When we have conceived all this, we shall have entertained no extravagant conception. There is the very best reason for believing that many of the stars are even far larger than the one we have imagined. I mean to say, that we have the very best *empirical* basis for such belief:—and, in looking back at the original, atomic arrangements for *diversity*, which have been assumed as a part of the Divine plan in the constitution of the Universe, we

shall be enabled easily to understand, and to credit, the existence of even far vaster disproportions in stellar size than any to which I have hitherto alluded. The largest orbs, of course, we must expect to find rolling through the widest vacancies of Space.

I remarked, just now, that to convey an idea of the interval between our Sun and any one of the other stars, we should require the eloquence of an archangel. In so saying, I should not be accused of exaggeration; for, in simple truth, these are topics on which it is scarcely possible to exaggerate. But let us bring the matter more distinctly before the eye of the mind.

In the first place, we may get a general, *relative* conception of the interval referred to, by comparing it with the inter-planetary spaces. If, for example, we suppose the Earth, which is, in reality 95 millions of miles from the Sun, to be only *one foot* from that luminary; then Neptune would be forty feet distant; *and the star Alpha Lyræ, at the very least, one hundred and fifty-nine.*

Now I presume that, in the termination of my last sentence, few of my readers have noticed any thing especially objectionable—particularly wrong. I said that the distance of the Earth from the Sun being taken at *one foot*, the distance of Neptune would be forty feet, and that of Alpha Lyræ, one hundred and fifty-nine. The proportion between one foot and one hundred and fifty-nine, has appeared, perhaps, to convey a sufficiently definite impression of the proportion between the two in-

tervals—that of the Earth from the Sun, and that of Alpha Lyræ from the same luminary. But my account of the matter should, in reality, have run thus:—The distance of the Earth from the Sun being taken at one foot, the distance of Neptune would be forty feet, and that of Alpha Lyræ, one hundred and fifty-nine——*miles:*—that is to say, I had assigned to Alpha Lyræ, in my first statement of the case, only the 5,280*th part* of that distance which is the *least distance possible* at which it can actually lie.

To proceed:—However distant a mere *planet* is, yet when we look at it through a telescope, we see it under a certain form—of a certain appreciable size. Now I have already hinted at the probable bulk of many of the stars; nevertheless, when we view any one of them, even through the most powerful telescope, it is found to present us with *no form*, and consequently with *no magnitude* whatever. We see it as a point, and nothing more.

Again:—Let us suppose ourselves walking, at night, on a highway. In a field on one side of the road, is a line of tall objects, say trees, the figures of which are distinctly defined against the background of the sky. This line of objects extends at right angles to the road, and from the road to the horizon. Now, as we proceed along the road, we see these objects changing their positions, respectively, in relation to a certain fixed point in that portion of the firmament which forms the background of the view. Let us suppose this fixed point—sufficiently fixed for our pur-

pose—to be the rising moon. We become aware, at once, that while the tree nearest us so far alters its position in respect to the moon, as to seem flying behind us, the tree in the extreme distance has scarcely changed at all its relative position with the satellite. We then go on to perceive that the farther the objects are from us, the less they alter their positions; and the converse. Then we begin, unwittingly, to estimate the distances of individual trees by the degrees in which they evince the relative alteration. Finally, we come to understand how it might be possible to ascertain the actual distance of any given tree in the line, by using the amount of relative alteration as a basis in a simple geometrical problem. Now, this relative alteration is what we call "parallax"; and by parallax we calculate the distances of the heavenly bodies. Applying the principle to the trees in question, we should, of course, be very much at a loss to comprehend the distance of *that* tree, which, however far we proceeded along the road, should evince *no* parallax at all. This, in the case described, is a thing impossible; but impossible only because all distances on our Earth are trivial indeed; in comparison with the vast cosmical quantities, we may speak of them as absolutely nothing.

Now, let us suppose the star Alpha Lyræ directly overhead; and let us imagine that, instead of standing on the Earth, we stand at one end of a straight road stretching through Space to a distance equalling the diameter of the Earth's orbit—that is to say, to a distance of *one hundred*

and ninety millions of miles. Having observed, by means of the most delicate micrometrical instruments, the exact position of the star, let us now pass along this inconceivable road, until we reach the other extremity. Now, once again, let us look at the star. It is *precisely* where we left it. Our instruments, however delicate, assure us that its relative position is absolutely—is identically the same, as at the commencement of our unutterable journey. *No* parallax—none whatever—has been found.

The fact is, that, in regard to the distance of the fixed stars—of any one of the myriads of suns glistening on the farther side of that awful chasm which separates our system from its brothers in the cluster to which it belongs—astronomical science, until very lately, could speak only with a negative certainty. Assuming the brightest as the nearest, we could say, even of *them*, only that there is a certain incomprehensible distance on the *hither* side of which they cannot be:—how far they are beyond it we had in no case been able to ascertain. We perceived, for example, that Alpha Lyræ cannot be nearer to us than 19 trillions, 200 billions, of miles; but, for all we knew, and indeed for all we now know, it may be distant from us the square, or the cube, or any other power of the number mentioned. By dint, however, of wonderfully minute and cautious observations, continued, with novel instruments, for many laborious years, *Bessel*, not long ago deceased, has lately succeeded in determining the distance of six or seven stars; among others, that of the star numbered 61

in the constellation of the Swan. The distance in this latter instance ascertained, is 670,000 times that of the Sun; which last it will be remembered, is 95 millions of miles. The star 61 Cygni, then, is nearly 64 trillions of miles from us—or more than three times the distance assigned, *as the least possible*, for Alpha Lyræ.

In attempting to appreciate this interval by the aid of any considerations of *velocity*, as we did in endeavoring to estimate the distance of the moon, we must leave out of sight, altogether, such nothings as the speed of a cannon-ball, or of sound. Light, however, according to the latest calculations of Struve, proceeds at the rate of 167,000 miles in a second. Thought itself cannot pass through this interval more speedily—if, indeed, thought can traverse it at all. Yet, in coming from 61 Cygni to us, even at this inconceivable rate, light occupies more than *ten years;* and, consequently, were the star this moment blotted out from the Universe, still, *for ten years*, would it continue to sparkle on, undimmed in its paradoxical glory.

Keeping now in mind whatever feeble conception we may have attained of the interval between our Sun and 61 Cygni, let us remember that this interval, however unutterably vast, we are permitted to consider as but the *average* interval among the countless host of stars composing that cluster, or "nebula," to which our system, as well as that of 61 Cygni, belongs. I have, in fact, stated the case with great moderation:—we have excellent rea-

son for believing 61 Cygni to be one of the *nearest* stars, and thus for concluding, at least for the present, that its distance from us is *less* than the average distance between star and star in the magnificent cluster of the Milky Way.

And here, once again and finally, it seems proper to suggest that even as yet we have been speaking of trifles. Ceasing to wonder at the space between star and star in our own or in any particular cluster, let us rather turn our thoughts to the intervals between cluster and cluster, in the all-comprehensive cluster of the Universe.

I have already said that light proceeds at the rate of 167,000 miles in a second—that is, about 10 millions of miles in a minute, or about 600 millions of miles in an hour:—yet so far removed from us are some of the "nebulæ" that even light, speeding with this velocity, could not and does not reach us, from those mysterious regions, in less than 3 *millions of years*. This calculation, moreover, is made by the elder Herschel, and in reference merely to those comparatively proximate clusters within the scope of his own telescope. There *are* "nebulæ," however, which, through the magical tube of Lord Rosse, are this instant whispering in our ears the secrets of a *million of ages* by-gone. In a word, the events which we behold now—at this moment—in those worlds—are the identical events which interested their inhabitants *ten hundred thousand centuries ago*. In intervals—in distances such as this suggestion forces upon the *soul*—rather than upon the mind—we find, at length, a fitting climax to all hitherto frivolous considerations of *quantity*.

Our fancies thus occupied with the cosmical distances, let us take the opportunity of referring to the difficulty which we have so often experienced, while pursuing *the beaten path* of astronomical reflection, *in accounting* for the immeasurable voids alluded to—in comprehending why chasms so totally unoccupied and therefore apparently so needless, have been made to intervene between star and star—between cluster and cluster—in understanding, to be brief, a sufficient reason for the Titanic scale, in respect of mere *Space*, on which the Universe is seen to be constructed. A rational cause for the phenomenon, I maintain that Astronomy has palpably failed to assign:—but the considerations through which, in this Essay, we have proceeded step by step, enable us clearly and immediately to perceive that *Space and Duration are one*. That the Universe might *endure* throughout an era at all commensurate with the grandeur of its component material portions and with the high majesty of its spiritual purposes, it was necessary that the original atomic diffusion be made to so inconceivable an extent as to be only not infinite. It was required, in a word, that the stars should be gathered into visibility from invisible nebulosity—proceed from nebulosity to consolidation—and so grow gray in giving birth and death to unspeakably numerous and complex variations of vitalic development:—it was required that the stars should do all this—should have time thoroughly to accomplish all these Divine purposes—*during the period* in which all things were effecting their

return into Unity with a velocity accumulating in the inverse proportion of the squares of the distances at which lay the inevitable End.

Throughout all this we have no difficulty in understanding the absolute accuracy of the Divine *adaptation.* The density of the stars, respectively, proceeds, of course, as their condensation diminishes; condensation and heterogeneity keep pace with each other; through the latter, which is the index of the former, we estimate the vitalic and spiritual development. Thus, in the density of the globes, we have the measure in which their purposes are fulfilled. *As* density proceeds—*as* the divine intentions *are* accomplished—*as* less and still less remains *to be* accomplished, so, in the same ratio, should we expect to find an acceleration of *the End*:—and thus the philosophical mind will easily comprehend that the Divine designs in constituting the stars, advance *mathematically* to their fulfilment:—and more; it will readily give the advance a mathematical expression; it will decide that this advance is inversely proportional with the squares of the distances of all created things from the starting-point and goal of their creation.

Not only is this Divine adaptation, however, mathematically accurate, but there is that about it which stamps it *as divine*, in distinction from that which is merely the work of human constructiveness. I allude to the complete *mutuality* of adaptation. For example: in human constructions a particular cause has a particular effect; a

particular intention brings to pass a particular object; but this is all; we see no reciprocity. The effect does not react upon the cause; the intention does not change relations with the object. In Divine constructions the object is either design or object as we choose to regard it—and we may take at any time a cause for an effect, or the converse—so that we can never absolutely decide which is which.

To give an instance: In polar climates the human frame, to maintain its animal heat, requires, for combustion in the capillary system, an abundant supply of highly azotized food, such as train-oil. But again—in polar climates nearly the sole food afforded man is the oil of abundant seals and whales. Now, whether is oil at hand because imperatively demanded, or the only thing demanded because the only thing to be obtained? It is impossible to decide. There is an absolute *reciprocity of adaptation.*

The pleasure which we derive from any display of human ingenuity is in the ratio of *the approach* to this species of reciprocity. In the construction of *plot*, for example, in fictitious literature, we should aim at so arranging the incidents that we shall not be able to determine, of any one of them, whether it depends from any one other or upholds it. In this sense, of course, *perfection of plot* is really, or practically, unattainable—but only because it is a finite intelligence that constructs. The plots of God are perfect. The Universe is a plot of God.

And now we have reached a point at which the intellect is forced, again, to struggle against its propensity for analogical inference—against its monomaniac grasping at the infinite. Moons have been seen *revolving* about planets; planets about stars; and the poetical instinct of humanity—its instinct of the symmetrical, if the symmetry be but a symmetry of surface—this *instinct*, which the Soul, not only of man but of all created beings, took up, in the beginning, from the *geometrical* basis of the Universal irradiation—impels us to the fancy of an endless extension of this system of *cycles*. Closing our eyes equally to *de*duction and *in*duction, we insist upon imagining a *revolution* of all the orbs of the Galaxy about some gigantic globe which we take to be the central pivot of the whole. Each cluster in the great cluster of clusters is imagined, of course, to be similarly supplied and constructed; while, that the "analogy" may be wanting at no point, we go on to conceive these clusters themselves, again, as *revolving* around some still more august sphere; —this latter, still again, *with* its encircling clusters, as but one of a yet more magnificent series of agglomerations, *gyrating* about yet another orb central *to them*—some orb still more unspeakably sublime—some orb, let us rather say, of infinite sublimity endlessly multiplied by the infinitely sublime. Such are the conditions, continued in perpetuity, which the voice of what some people term "analogy," calls upon the Fancy to depict and the Reason to contemplate, if possible, without becoming dissatisfied

with the picture. Such, *in general*, are the interminable gyrations beyond gyration which we have been instructed by Philosophy to comprehend and to account for, at least in the best manner we can. Now and then, however, a philosopher proper—one whose frenzy takes a very determinate turn—whose genius, to speak more reverentially, has a strongly-pronounced washer-womanish bias, doing every thing up by the dozen—enables us to see *precisely* that point out of sight, at which the revolutionary processes in question do, and of right ought to, come to an end.

It is hardly worth while, perhaps, even to sneer at the reveries of Fourrier—but much has been said, latterly, of the hypothesis of Mädler—that there exists, in the centre of the Galaxy, a stupendous globe about which all the systems of the cluster revolve. The *period* of our own, indeed, has been stated—117 millions of years.

That our Sun has a motion in space, independently of its rotation, and revolution about the system's centre of gravity, has long been suspected. This motion, granting it to exist, would be manifested perspectively. The stars in that firmamental region which we were leaving behind us, would, in a very long series of years, become crowded; those in the opposite quarter scattered. Now, by means of astronomical History, we ascertain, cloudily, that some such phenomena have occurred. On this ground it has been declared that our system is moving to a point in the heavens diametrically opposite the star

Zeta Herculis:—but this inference is, perhaps, the maximum to which we have any logical right. Mädler, however, has gone so far as to designate a particular star, Alcyone in the Pleiades, as being at or about the very spot around which a general *revolution* is performed.

Now, since by "analogy" we are led, in the first instance, to these dreams, it is no more than proper that we should abide by analogy, at least in some measure, during their development; and that analogy which suggests the revolution, suggests at the same time a central orb about which it should be performed:—so far the astronomer was consistent, This central orb, however, should, dynamically, be greater than all the orbs, taken together, which surround it. Of these there are about 100 millions. "Why, then," it was of course demanded, "do we not *see* this vast central sun—*at least equal* in mass to 100 millions of such suns as ours—why do we not *see* it—*we*, especially, who occupy the mid region of the cluster—the very locality *near* which, at all events, must be situated this incomparable star?" The reply was ready —"It must be non-luminous, as are our planets." Here, then, to suit a purpose, analogy is suddenly let fall. "Not so," it may be said—"we know that non-luminous suns actually exist." It is true that we have reason at least for supposing so; but we have certainly no reason whatever for supposing that the non-luminous suns in question are encircled by *luminous* suns, while these again are surrounded by non-luminous planets:—and it is precisely all

this with which Mädler is called upon to find any thing analogous in the heavens—for it is precisely all this which he imagines in the case of the Galaxy. Admitting the thing to be so, we cannot help here picturing to ourselves how sad a puzzle the *why it is so* must prove to all *a priori* philosophers.

But granting in the very teeth of analogy and of every thing else, the non-luminosity of the vast central orb, we may still inquire how this orb, so enormous, could fail of being rendered visible by the flood of light thrown upon it from the 100 millions of glorious suns glaring in all directions about it. Upon the urging of this question, the idea of an actually solid central sun appears, in some measure to have been abandoned; and speculation proceeded to assert that the systems of the cluster perform their revolutions merely about an immaterial centre of gravity common to all. Here again then, to suit a purpose, analogy is let fall. The planets of our system revolve, it is true, about a common centre of gravity; but they do this in connection with, and in consequence of, a material sun whose mass more than counterbalances the rest of the system.

The mathematical circle is a curve composed of an infinity of straight lines. But this idea of the circle—an idea which, in view of all ordinary geometry, is merely the mathematical, as contradistinguished from the practical, idea—is, in sober fact, the *practical* conception which alone we have any right to entertain in regard to the

majestic circle with which we have to deal, at least in fancy, when we suppose our system revolving about a point in the centre of the Galaxy. Let the most vigorous of human imaginations attempt to take but a single step toward the comprehension of a sweep so ineffable! It would scarcely be paradoxical to say that a flash of lightning itself, travelling *forever* upon the circumference of this unutterable circle, would still, *forever*, be travelling in a straight line. That the path of our Sun in such an orbit would, to any human perception, deviate in the slightest degree from a straight line, even in a million of years, is a proposition not to be entertained:—yet we are required to believe that a curvature has become apparent during the brief period of our astronomical history—during a mere point—during the utter nothingness of two or three thousand years.

It may be said that Mädler *has* really ascertained a curvature in the direction of our system's now well-established progress through Space. Admitting, if necessary, this fact to be in reality such, I maintain that nothing is thereby shown except the reality of this fact—the fact of a curvature. For its *thorough* determination, ages will be required; and, when determined, it will be found indicative of some binary or other multiple relation between our Sun and some one or more of the proximate stars. I hazard nothing, however, in predicting, that, after the lapse of many centuries, all efforts at determining the path of our Sun through Space will be abandoned as

fruitless. This is easily conceivable when we look at the infinity of perturbation it must experience, from its perpetually-shifting relations with other orbs, in the common approach of all to the nucleus of the Galaxy.

But in examining other "nebulæ" than that of the Milky Way—in surveying, generally, the clusters which overspread the heavens—do we or do we not find confirmation of Mädler's hypothesis? We do *not*. The forms of the clusters are exceedingly diverse when casually viewed; but on close inspection, through powerful telescopes, we recognize the sphere, very distinctly, as at least the proximate form of all; their constitution, in general, being at variance with the idea of revolution about a common centre.

"It is difficult," says Sir John Herschel, "to form any conception of the dynamical state of such systems. On one hand, without a rotary motion and a centrifugal force, it is hardly possible not to regard them as in a state of *progressive collapse*. On the other, granting such a motion and such a force, we find it no less difficult to reconcile their forms with the rotation of the whole system [meaning cluster] around any single axis, without which internal collision would appear to be inevitable."

Some remarks lately made about the "nebulæ" by Dr. Nichol, in taking quite a different view of the cosmical conditions from any taken in this Discourse, have a very peculiar applicability to the point now at issue. He says:

"When our greatest telescopes are brought to bear upon them, we find that those which were thought to be irregular, are not so; they approach nearer to a globe. Here is one that looked oval; but Lord Rosse's telescope brought it into a circle. * * * Now there occurs a very remarkable circumstance in reference to these comparatively sweeping circular masses of nebulæ. We find they are not entirely circular, but the reverse; and that all around them, on every side, there are volumes of stars, *stretching out apparently as if they were rushing toward a great central mass in consequence of the action of some great power.*" *

Were I to describe, in my own words, what must necessarily be the existing condition of each nebula on the hypothesis that all matter is, as I suggest, now returning to its original Unity, I should simply be going over, nearly verbatim, the language here employed by Dr. Nichol, without the faintest suspicion of that stupendous truth which is the key to these nebular phenomena.

And here let me fortify my position still further, by the voice of a greater than Mädler—of one, moreover, to whom all the data of Mädler have long been familiar things, carefully and thoroughly considered. Referring to the elaborate calculations of Argelander—the very researches which form Mädler's basis—*Humboldt*, whose

* I must be understood as denying, *especially*, only the *revolutionary* portion of Mädler's hypothesis. Of course, if no great central orb exists *now* in our cluster, such will exist hereafter. Whenever existing, it will be merely the *nucleus* of the consolidation.

generalizing powers have never, perhaps, been equalled, has the following observation:

"When we regard the real, proper, or non-perspective motions of the stars, we find *many groups of them moving in opposite directions;* and the data as yet in hand render it not necessary, at least, to conceive that the systems composing the Milky Way, or the clusters, generally, composing the Universe, are revolving about any particular centre unknown, whether luminous or non-luminous. It is but Man's longing for a fundamental First Cause, that impels both his intellect and fancy to the adoption of such an hypothesis." *

The phenomenon here alluded to—that of "many groups moving in opposite directions"—is quite inexplicable by Mädler's idea; but arises, as a necessary consequence from that which forms the basis of this Discourse. While the *merely gener direction* of each atom—of each moon, planet, star, or cluster—would, on my hypothesis, be, of course, absolutely rectilinear, while the *general* path of all bodies would be a right line leading to the centre of all; it is clear, nevertheless, that this general rectilinearity would be compounded of what, with scarcely any exag-

* Betrachtet man die nicht perspectivischen eigenen Bewegungen der Sterne, so scheinen viele gruppenweise in ihrer Richtung entgegengesezt; und die bisher gesammelten Thatsachen machen es auf 's wenigste nicht nothwendig, anzunehmen, dass alle Theile unserer Sternenschicht oder gar der gesammten Sterneninseln, welche den Weltraum füllen, sich um einen grossen, unbekannten, leuchtenden, oder dunkeln Centralkörper bewegen. Das Streben nach den letzen und höchsten Grundursachen macht freilich die reflectirende Thätigkeit des Menschen, wie seine Phantasie, zu einer solchen Annahme geneigt.

geration, we may term an infinity of particular curves —an infinity of local deviations from rectilinearity—the result of continuous differences of relative position among the multitudinous masses, as each proceeded on its own proper journey to the End.

I quoted, just now, from Sir John Herschel, the following words, used in reference to the clusters:—"On one hand, without a rotary motion and a centrifugal force, it is hardly possible not to regard them as in a state of "*progressive collapse.*" The fact is, that, in surveying the "nebulæ" with a telescope of high power, we shall find it quite impossible, having once conceived this idea of "collapse," not to gather, at all points, corroboration of the idea. A nucleus is always apparent, in the direction of which the stars seem to be precipitating themselves; nor can these nuclei be mistaken for merely perspective phenomena:—the clusters are *really* denser near the centre —sparser in the regions more remote from it. In a word, we see every thing as we *should* see it were a collapse taking place; but, in general, it may be said of these clusters, that we can fairly entertain, while looking at them, the ideal of *orbital movement about a centre*, only by admitting the *possible* existence, in the distant domains of space, of dynamical laws with which *we* are unacquainted.

On the part of Herschel, however, there is evidently *a reluctance* to regard the nebulæ as in "a state of progressive collapse." But if facts—if even appearances justify the supposition of their being in this state, *why*, it may

well be demanded, is he disinclined to admit it? Simply on account of a prejudice; merely because the supposition is at war with a preconceived and utterly baseless notion—that of the endlessness—that of the eternal stability of the Universe.

If the propositions of this Discourse are tenable, the "state of progressive collapse" is *precisely* that state in which alone we are warranted in considering All Things; and, with due humility, let me here confess that, for my part, I am at a loss to conceive how any *other* understanding of the existing condition of affairs could ever have made its way into the human brain. "The tendency to collapse" and "the attraction of gravitation" are convertible phrases. In using either, we speak of the reaction of the First Act. Never was necessity less obvious than that of supposing Matter imbued with an ineradicable *quality* forming part of its material nature—a quality, or instinct, *forever* inseparable from it, and by dint of which inalienable principle every atom is *perpetually* impelled to seek its fellow-atom. Never was necessity less obvious than that of entertaining this unphilosophical idea. Going boldly behind the vulgar thought, we have to conceive, metaphysically, that the gravitating principle appertains to Matter *temporarily*—only while diffused—only while existing as Many instead of as One—appertains to it by virtue of its state of irradiation alone—appertains, in a word, altogether to its *condition*, and not in the slightest degree to *itself*. In this view, when the irradiation shall

have returned into its source—when the reaction shall be completed—the gravitating principle will no longer exist. And, in fact, astronomers, without at any time reaching the idea here suggested, seem to have been approximating it, in the assertion that "if there were but one body in the universe, it would be impossible to understand how the principle, Gravity, could obtain"; that is to say, from a consideration of Matter as they find it, they reach a conclusion at which I deductively arrive. That so pregnant a suggestion as the one quoted should have been permitted to remain so long unfruitful, is, nevertheless, a mystery which I find it difficult to fathom.

It is, perhaps, in no little degree, however, our propensity for the continuous—for the analogical—in the present case more particularly for the symmetrical—which has been leading us astray. And, in fact, the sense of the symmetrical is an instinct which may be depended upon with an almost blindfold reliance. It is the poetical essence of the Universe—*of the Universe* which, in the supremeness of its symmetry, is but the most sublime of poems. Now symmetry and consistency are convertible terms:—thus Poetry and Truth are one. A thing is consistent in the ratio of its truth—true in the ratio of its consistency. *A perfect consistency, I repeat, can be nothing but an absolute truth.* We may take it for granted, then, that man cannot long or widely err, if he suffer himself to be guided by his poetical, which I have maintained to be his truthful, in being his symmetrical, instinct. He must

have a care, however, lest, in pursuing too heedlessly the superficial symmetry of forms and motions, he leaves out of sight the really essential symmetry of the principles which determine and control them.

That the stellar bodies would finally be merged in one —that, at last, all would be drawn into the substance of *one stupendous central orb already existing*—is an idea which, for some time past, seems, vaguely and indeterminately, to have held possession of the fancy of mankind. It is an idea, in fact, which belongs to the class of the *excessively obvious*. It springs, instantly, from a superficial observation of the cyclic and seemingly *gyrating* or *vorticial* movements of those individual portions of the Universe which come most immediately and most closely under our observation. There is not, perhaps, a human being, of ordinary education and of average reflective capacity, to whom, at some period, the fancy in question has not occurred, as if spontaneously, or intuitively, and wearing all the character of a very profound and very original conception. This conception, however, so commonly entertained, has never, within my knowledge, arisen out of any abstract considerations. Being, on the contrary, always suggested, as I say, by the vorticial movements about centres, a reason for it, also,—a *cause* for the ingathering of all the orbs into one, *imagined to be already existing*, was naturally sought in the same direction—among these cyclic movements themselves.

Thus it happened that, on announcement of the gradual

and perfectly regular decrease observed in the orbit of Encke's comet, at every successive revolution about our Sun, astronomers were nearly unanimous in the opinion that the cause in question was found—that a principle was discovered sufficient to account, physically, for that final, universal agglomeration which, I repeat, the analogical, symmetrical, or poetical instinct of man had pre-determined to understand as something more than a simple hypothesis.

This cause—this sufficient reason for the final ingathering—was declared to exist in an exceedingly rare but still material medium pervading space; which medium, by retarding, in some degree, the progress of the comet, perpetually weakened its tangential force; thus giving a predominance to the centripetal; which, of course, drew the comet nearer and nearer at each revolution, and would eventually precipitate it upon the Sun.

All this was strictly logical—admitting the medium or ether; but this ether was assumed, most illogically, on the ground that no *other* mode than the one spoken of could be discovered, of accounting for the observed decrease in the orbit of the comet:—as if from the fact that we could *discover* no other mode of accounting for it, it followed, in any respect, that no other mode of accounting for it existed. It is clear that innumerable causes might operate, in combination, to diminish the orbit, without even a possibility of our ever becoming acquainted with one of them. In the mean time, it has never been

fairly shown, perhaps, why the retardation occasioned by the skirts of the Sun's atmosphere, through which the comet passes at perihelion, is not enough to account for the phenomenon. That Encke's comet will be absorbed into the Sun, is probable; that all the comets of the system will be absorbed, is more than merely possible; but, in such case, the principle of absorption must be referred to eccentricity of orbit—to the close approximation to the Sun, of the comets at their perihelia; and is a principle not affecting, in any degree, the ponderous *spheres*, which are to be regarded as the true material constituents of the Universe. Touching comets in general, let me here suggest, in passing, that we cannot be far wrong in looking upon them as the *lightning flashes of the cosmical Heaven.*

The idea of a retarding ether, and, through it, of a final agglomeration of all things, seemed at one time, however, to be confirmed by the observation of a positive decrease in the orbit of the solid moon. By reference to eclipses recorded 2500 years ago, it was found that the velocity of the satellite's revolution *then* was considerably less than it is *now;* that on the hypothesis that its motions in its orbit is uniformly in accordance with Kepler's law, and was accurately determined *then*—2500 years ago —it is now in advance of the position it *should* occupy, by nearly 9000 miles. The increase of velocity proved, of course, a diminution of orbit; and astronomers were fast yielding to a belief in an ether, as the sole mode of

accounting for the phenomenon, when Lagrange came to the rescue. He showed that, owing to the configurations of the spheroids, the shorter axes of their ellipses are subject to variation in length, the longer axes being permanent; and that this variation is continuous and vibratory—so that every orbit is in a state of transition, either from circle to ellipse, or from ellipse to circle. In the case of the moon, where the shorter axis is *de*creasing, the orbit is passing from circle to ellipse, and consequently, is *de*creasing too; but, after a long series of ages, the ultimate eccentricity will be attained; then the shorter axis will proceed to *in*crease, until the orbit becomes a circle; when the process of shortening will again take place;—and so on forever. In the case of the Earth, the orbit is passing from ellipse to circle. The facts thus demonstrated do away, of course, with all necessity for supposing an ether, and with all apprehension of the system's instability—on the ether's account.

It will be remembered that I have myself assumed what we may term *an ether*. I have spoken of a subtle *influence* which we know to be ever in attendance upon matter, although becoming manifest only through matter's heterogeneity. To this *influence*—without daring to touch it at all in any effort at explaining its awful *nature*—I have referred the various phenomena of electricity, heat, light, magnetism; and more—of vitality, consciousness, and thought—in a word, of spirituality. It will be seen at once, then, that the ether thus conveyed is radi-

cally distinct from the ether of the astronomers; inasmuch as theirs is *matter* and mine *not*.

With the idea of material ether, seems, thus, to have departed altogether the thought of that universal agglomeration so long predetermined by the poetical fancy of mankind,—an agglomeration in which a sound Philosophy might have been warranted in putting faith, at least to a certain extent, if for no other reason than that by this poetical fancy it *had* been so predetermined. But so far as Astronomy, so far as mere Physics, have yet spoken, the cycles of the Universe have no conceivable end. Had an end been demonstrated, however, from so purely collateral a cause as an ether, Man's instinct of the Divine *capacity to adapt*, would have rebelled against the demonstration. We should have been forced to regard the Universe with some such sense of dissatisfaction as we experience in contemplating an unnecessary complex work of human art. Creation would have affected us as an imperfect *plot* in a romance, where the *dénoûment* is awkwardly brought about by interposed incidents external and foreign to the main subject, instead of springing out of the bosom of the thesis—out of the heart of the ruling idea—instead of arising as a result of the primary proposition—as inseparable and inevitable part and parcel of the fundamental conception of the book.

What I mean by the symmetry of mere surface will now be more clearly understood. It is simply by the blandishment of this symmetry that we have been beguiled

into the general idea of which Mädler's hypothesis is but a part—the idea of the vorticial indrawing of the orbs. Dismissing this nakedly physical conception, the symmetry of principle sees the end of all things metaphysically involved in the thought of a beginning; seeks and finds in this origin of all things the *rudiment* of this end; and perceives the impiety of supposing this end likely to be brought about less simply—less directly—less obviously—less artistically—than through *the reaction of the originating Act.*

Recurring, then, to a previous suggestion, let us understand the systems—let us understand each star, with its attendant planets—as but a Titanic atom existing in space with precisely the same inclination for Unity which characterized, in the beginning, the actual atoms after their irradiation throughout the Universal sphere. As these original atoms rushed toward each other in generally straight lines, so let us conceive as at least generally rectilinear, the paths of the system-atoms toward their respective centres of aggregation:—and in this direct drawing together of the systems into clusters, with a similar and simultaneous drawing together of the clusters themselves while undergoing consolidation, we have at length attained the great *Now*—the awful Present—the Existing Condition of the Universe.

Of the still more awful Future a not irrational analogy may guide us in framing an hypothesis. The equilibrium between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of each

system being necessarily destroyed upon attainment of a certain proximity to the nucleus of the cluster to which it belongs, there must occur, at once, a chaotic or seemingly chaotic precipitation, of the moons upon the planets, of the planets upon the suns, and of the suns upon the nuclei; and the general result of this precipitation must be the gathering of the myriad now-existing stars of the firmament into an almost infinitely less number of almost infinitely superior spheres. In being immeasurably fewer, the worlds of that day will be immeasurably greater than our own. Then, indeed, amid unfathomable abysses, will be glaring unimaginable suns. But all this will be merely a climatic magnificence foreboding the great End. Of this End the new genesis described can be but a very partial postponement. While undergoing consolidation, the clusters themselves, with a speed prodigiously accumulative, have been rushing toward their own general centre—and now, with a thousand-fold electric velocity, commensurate only with their material grandeur and with the spiritual passion of their appetite for oneness, the majestic remnants of the tribe of Stars flash, at length, into a common embrace. The inevitable catastrophe is at hand.

But this catastrophe—what is it? We have seen accomplished the ingatherings of the orbs. Henceforward, are we not to understand *one material globe of globes* as constituting and comprehending the Universe? Such a fancy would be altogether at war with every assumption and consideration of this Discourse.

I have already alluded to that absolute *reciprocity of adaptation* which is the idiosyncrasy of the divine Art —stamping it divine. Up to this point of our reflections, we have been regarding the electrical influence as a something by dint of whose repulsion alone Matter is enabled to exist in that state of diffusion demanded for the fulfilment of its puposes:—so far, in a word, we have been considering the influence in question as ordained for Matter's sake to subserve the objects of matter. With a perfectly legitimate reciprocity, we are now permitted to look at Matter, as created *solely for the sake of this influence*—solely to serve the objects of this spiritual Ether. Through the aid—by the means—through the agency of Matter, and by dint of its heterogeneity—is this Ether manifested—is *Spirit individualized.* It is merely in the development of this Ether, through heterogeneity, that particular masses of Matter become animate—sensitive—and in the ratio of their heterogeneity; some reaching a degree of sensitiveness revolving what we call *Thought*, and thus attaining Conscious Intelligence.

In this view, we are enabled to perceive Matter as a Means—not as an End. Its purposes are thus seen to have been comprehended in its diffusion; and with the return into Unity these purposes cease. The absolutely consolidated globe of globes would be *objectless*,—therefore not for a moment could it continue to exist. Matter, created for an end, would unquestionably, on fulfilment of that end, be Matter no longer. Let us endeavor to under-

stand that it would disappear, and that God would remain all in all.

That every work of Divine conception must coexist and coexpire with its particular design, seems to me especially obvious; and I make no doubt that, on perceiving the final globe of globes to be *objectless*, the majority of my readers will be satisfied with my "*therefore* it cannot continue to exist." Nevertheless, as the startling thought of its instantaneous disappearance is one which the most powerful intellect cannot be expected readily to entertain on grounds so decidedly abstract, let us endeavor to look at the idea from some other and more ordinary point of view:—let us see how thoroughly and beautifully it is corroborated in an *a posteriori* consideration of Matter as we actually find it.

I have before said that "Attraction and Repulsion being undeniably the sole properties by which Matter is manifested to Mind, we are justified in assuming that Matter *exists* only as Attraction and Repulsion—in other words, that Attraction and Repulsion *are* Matter; there being no conceivable case in which we may not employ the term Matter and the terms 'Attraction' and 'Repulsion' taken together, as equivalent, and therefore convertible, expressions of Logic." *

Now the very definition of Attraction implies particularity—the existence of parts, particles, or atoms, for we define it as the tendency of "each atom, etc., to every

* Page 34.

other atom," etc., according to a certain law. Of course where there are *no* parts—where there is absolute Unity—where the tendency to oneness is satisfied—there can be no Attraction:—this has been fully shown, and all Philosophy admits it. When, on fulfilment of its purposes, then, Matter shall have returned into its original condition of *One*—a condition which presupposes the expulsion of the separative ether, whose province and whose capacity are limited to keeping the atoms apart until that great day when, this ether being no longer needed, the overwhelming pressure of the finally collective Attraction shall at length just sufficiently predominate * and expel it;—when, I say, Matter, finally, expelling the Ether, shall have returned into absolute Unity, it will then (to speak paradoxically for the moment) be Matter without Attraction and without Repulsion—in other words, Matter without Matter—in other words, again, *Matter no more.* In sinking into Unity, it will sink at once into that Nothingness which, to all Finite Perception, Unity must be—into that Material Nihility from which alone we can conceive it to have been evoked—to have been *created* by the Volition of God.

I repeat, then: Let us endeavor to comprehend that the final globe of globes will instantaneously disappear, and that God will remain all in all.

But are we here to pause? Not so. On the Universal agglomeration on dissolution, we can readily conceive

* "Gravity, therefore, must be the strongest of forces."—See page 36.

that a new and perhaps totally different series of conditions may ensue,—another creation and irradiation, returning into itself,—another action and reaction of the Divine Will. Guiding our imaginations by that omniprevalent law of laws, the law of periodicity, are we not, indeed, more than justified in entertaining a belief—let us say, rather, in indulging a hope—that the processes we have here ventured to contemplate will be renewed forever, and forever, and forever; a novel Universe swelling into existence, and then subsiding into nothingness, at every throb of the Heart Divine?

And now—this Heart Divine—what is it? *It is our own.*

Let not the merely seeming irreverence of this idea frighten our souls from that cool exercise of conciousness —from that deep tranquillity of self-inspection—through which alone we can hope to attain the presence of this, the most sublime of truths, and look it leisurely in the face.

The *phenomena* on which our conclusions must at this point depend, are merely spiritual shadows, but not the less thoroughly substantial.

We walk about, amid the destines of our world-existence, encompassed by dim and ever present *Memories* of a Destiny more vast—very distant in the by-gone time, and infinitely awful.

We live out a Youth peculiarly haunted by such dreams; yet never mistaking them for dreams. As Memories we

know them. *During our Youth* the distinction is too clear to deceive us even for a moment.

So long as this youth endures, the feeling *that we exist*, is the most natural of all feelings. We understand it *thoroughly*. That there was a period at which we did *not* exist—or, that it might so have happened that we never had existed at all—are the considerations, indeed, which *during this youth*, we find difficulty in understanding. Why we should *not* exist, is, *up to the epoch of our Manhood*, of all queries the most unanswerable. Existence—self-existence—existence from all Time to all Eternity—seems, up to the epoch of Manhood, a normal and questionable condition,—*seems because it is.*

But now comes the period at which a conventional World-Reason awakens us from the truth of our dream. Doubt, Surprise, and Incomprehensibility arrive at the same moment. They say: "You live, and the time was when you lived not. You have been created. An Intelligence exists greater than your own; and it is only through this Intelligence you live at all." These things we struggle to comprehend and cannot,—*cannot*, because these things, being untrue, are thus, of necessity, incomprehensible.

No thinking being lives who, at some luminous point of his life of thought, has not felt himself lost amid the surges of futile efforts at understanding or believing, that any thing exists *greater than his own soul.* The utter impossibility of any one's soul feeling itself inferior to an-

other; the intense, overwhelming dissatisfaction and rebellion at the thought;—these, with the omniprevalent aspirations at perfection, are but the spiritual, co-incident with the material, struggles toward the original Unity—are, to my mind at least, a species of proof far surpassing what Man terms demonstration, that no one soul *is* inferior to another—that nothing is, or can be, superior to any one soul—that each soul is, in part, its own God—its own Creator;—in a word, that God—the material *and* spiritual God—*now* exists solely in the diffused Matter and Spirit of the Universe; and that the regathering of this diffused Matter and Spirit will be but the re-constitution of the *purely* Spiritual and Individual God.

In this view, and in this view alone, we comprehend the riddles of Divine Injustice—of Inexorable Fate. In this view alone the existence of Evil becomes intelligible; but in this view it becomes more—it becomes endurable. Our souls no longer rebel at a *Sorrow* which we ourselves have imposed upon ourselves, in furtherance of our own purposes—with a view—if even with a futile view—to the extension of our own *Joy*.

I have spoken of *Memories* that haunt us during our youth. They sometimes pursue us even in our Manhood;—assume gradually less and less indefinite shapes:—now and then speak to us with low voices, saying:

"There was an epoch in the Night of Time, when a still-existent Being existed—one of an absolutely infinite number of similar Beings that people the absolutely infinite

domains of the absolutely infinite space.* It was not and is not in the power of this Being—any more than it is in your own—to extend, by actual increase, the joy of his Existence; but just as it *is* in your power to expand or to concentrate your pleasures (the absolute amount of happiness remaining always the same) so did and does a similar capability appertain to this Divine Being, who thus passes his Eternity in perpetual variation of Concentrated Self and almost Infinite Self-Diffusion. What you call The Universe is but his present expansive existence. He now feels his life through an infinity of imperfect pleasures—the partial and pain-intertangled pleasures of those inconceivably numerous things which you designate as his creatures, but which are really but infinite individualizations of Himself. All these creatures—*all*—those which you term animate, as well as those to whom you deny life for no better reason than that you do not behold it in operation—*all* these creatures have, in a greater or less degree, a capacity for pleasure and for pain:—*but the general sum of their sensations is precisely that amount of Happiness which appertains by right to the Divine Being when concentrated within Himself.* These creatures are all, too, more or less conscious Intelligences; conscious, first, of a proper identity; conscious, secondly, and by faint indeterminate glimpses, of an identity with the Divine Being of whom we speak—of an identity with God. Of

* See pages 105–106—Paragraph commencing "I reply that the right," and ending "proper and particular God."

the two classes of consciousness, fancy that the former will grow weaker, the latter stronger, during the long succession of ages which must elapse before these myriads of individual Intelligences become blended—when the bright stars become blended—into One. Think that the sense of individual identity will be gradually merged in the general consciousness—that Man, for example, ceasing imperceptibly to feel himself Man, will at length attain that awfully triumphant epoch when he shall recognize his existence as that of Jehovah. In the mean time bear in mind that all is Life—Life—Life within Life—the less within the greater, and all within the *Spirit Divine.*

The theories of the universe propounded in "Eureka" had, it appears, been under consideration with Poe for a year or more previous to the publication of that Essay.

In February, 1848, Poe had outlined these theories in a letter "to a correspondent" (whose name is not recorded), of which the following are the more important portions:

"By the by, lest you infer that my views, in detail, are the same as those advanced in the *Nebular Hypothesis*, I venture to offer a few addenda, the substance of which was penned, though never printed, several years ago, under the head of

A PREDICTION.

"As soon as the beginning of the next century it will be entered *in the books* that the Sun was originally condensed *at once* (not gradually, according to the supposition of Laplace) to his smallest size; that, thus condensed, he rotated on an axis; that this axis of rotation was not the central line of his figure, so that he not only rotated, but revolved in an elliptical orbit (the rotation and revolution are one, but I separate them for convenience of illustration); that, thus formed and thus revolving, he was on fire and sent into space, his substance in vapor, this vapor reaching farthest on the side of the larger hemisphere, partly on account of the largeness, but principally be-

cause the force of the fire was greater there ; that, in due time, the vapor, not necessarily carried then to the place now occupied by Neptune, condensed into that planet ; that Neptune took, as a matter of course, the same figure that the Sun had, which figure made his rotation a revolution in an elliptical orbit ; that, in consequence of such revolution—in consequence of his being *carried backward* at each of the *daily* revolutions—the velocity of his *annual* revolution is not so great as it would be if it depended solely upon the Sun's velocity of rotation (Kepler's third law) ; that his figure, by influencing his rotation—the heavier half, as it turns downward toward the Sun, gains an impetus sufficient to carry it past the direct line of attraction, and thus to *throw outward* the centre of gravity—gave him power to save himself from falling to the Sun (and, perhaps, to work himself gradually outward to the position he now occupies) ; that he received, through a series of ages, the Sun's heat, which penetrated to his centre, causing volcanoes eventually, and thus throwing off vapor, and which evaporated substances upon his surface, till finally his moons and his gaseous ring (if it is true that he has a ring) were produced ; that these moons took elliptical forms, rotated and revolved, 'both under one,' were kept in their *monthly* orbits by the centrifugal force acquired in their *daily* orbits, and required a longer time to make their monthly revolutions than they would have required if they had had no daily revolutions.

"I have said enough, without referring to the other planets, to give you an inkling of my hypothesis, which is all I intended to do.

"You perceive that I hold to the idea that our moon must rotate on her axis oftener than she revolves round her primary, the same being the case with the moons of Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus.

"Since the penning, a closer analysis of the matter contained has led me to modify somewhat my opinion as to the origin of the satellites—that is, I hold now that they came, not from vapor sent off in volcanic eruptions, and by simple diffusion under the solar rays, but from rings of it which were left in the inter-planetary spaces after the precipitation of the primaries. There is no insuperable obstacle in the way of the conception that meteoric stones and 'shooting-stars' have their source in matter which has gone off from volcanoes and by common evaporation ; but it is hardly supposable that a sufficient quantity could be produced thus to make a body so large as, by centrifugal force resulting from rotation, to withstand the absorptive power of its parent's rotation. The event implied may take place not until the planets have become flaming suns—*from an accumulation of their own Sun's caloric, reacting from centre to surface, which shall in the lonesome latter days melt all the 'elements,' and dissipate the solid foundations out as a scroll.*

"The Sun forms, in rotating, a vortex in the ether surrounding him. The planets have their orbits lying within this vortex at different distances from its centre; so that their liabilities to be absorbed by it are, other things being equal, inversely according to those distances, since length, not surface, is the measure of the absorptive power along the lines marking the orbits. Each planet overcomes its liability—that is, keeps in its orbit—through a counter-vortex generated by its own rotation. The force of such counter-vortex is measured by multiplying together the producing planet's density and rotary velocity; which velocity depends, not upon the length of the planet's equatorial circumference, but upon the distance through which a given point of the equator is carried during a rotary period. Then if Venus and Mercury, for example, have now the orbits in which they commenced their revolutions—the orbit of the former 68 million miles, and that of the latter 37 million miles, from the centre of the Sun's vortex; if the diameter of Venus is $2\frac{2}{3}$ times the diameter, and her density is the same with the density, of Mercury; and if the rotary velocity of the equator of Venus is 1000 miles per hour, that of Mercury's equator is 1900 miles per hour, making the diameter of his *orbit of rotation* 14,500 miles—nearly five times that of himself. But I pass this point without farther examination. Whether there is or is not a difference in the relative conditions of the different planets sufficient to cause such diversity in the extents of their peripheries of rotation as is indicated, still each planet is to be considered to have, other things being equal, a vortical resistance bearing the same proportion, inversely, to that of every other planet which its distance from the centre of the solar vortex bears to the distance of every other from the same; so that if it be removed inward or outward from its position, it will increase or diminish that resistance, accordingly, by adding to or subtracting from its speed or rotation. As the rotary period must be one in the two cases, the greater or less speed can be produced only by the lengthening or the shortening of the circumference described by the rotation.

"Then Mercury, at the distance of Venus, would rotate in an orbit only $\frac{37}{68}$ as broad as the one in which he does rotate; so his centrifugal force, in that position, would be only $\frac{37}{68}$ as great as it is in his own position; so his capability, while there, of resisting the *forward pressure* of the Sun's vortex, which prevents him from passing his full (*circle*) distance behind his centre of rotation and thus adds to his velocity in his annual orbit, would be but $\frac{37}{68}$ of what it is in his own place. But this forward pressure is only $\frac{37}{68}$ as great at the distance of Venus as it is at that of Mercury. Then Mercury, with his own rotary speed in the annual orbit of Venus, would move but $\frac{37}{68}$ as fast as Venus moves in it; while Venus, with her rotary speed in Mercury's annual orbit, would move $\frac{68}{37}$ as fast as she moves in her own—

that is, $\frac{68}{87}$ of $\frac{68}{87}$ as fast as Mercury would move in the same (annual orbit of Venus). It follows that the square root of $\frac{68}{87}$ is the measure of the velocity of Mercury in his own annual orbit with his own rotary speed, compared with that of Venus in her annual orbit with her rotary speed—in accordance with the fact.

"Such is my explanation of Kepler's first and third laws, which laws *cannot* be explained upon the principle of Newton's theory.

"Two planets, gathered from portions of the Sun's vapor into one orbit, would rotate through the same ellipse with velocities proportional to their densities—that is, the denser planet would rotate the more swiftly; since, in condensing, it would have descended farther toward the Sun. For example, suppose the Earth and Jupiter to be the two planets in one orbit. The diameter of the former is 8,000 miles; period of rotation 24 hours. The diameter of the latter is 88,000 miles: period, $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The ring of vapor out of which the Earth was formed was of a certain (perpendicular) width; that out of which Jupiter was formed was of a certain greater width. In condensing, the springs of ether lying among the particles (these springs having been latent before the condensation began) were let out, the number of them along any given radial line being the number of spaces between all the couples of the particles constituting the line. If the two condensations had gone on in simple diametric proportions, Jupiter would have put forth only 11 times as many springs as the Earth did, and his velocity would have been but 11 times her velocity. But the fact that the falling downward of her particles was completed when they had got so far that 24 hours were required for her equator to make its rotary circuit, while that of his particles continued till but about $\frac{2}{5}$ of her period was occupied by his equator in effecting *its* revolution, shows that his springs were increased above her's in still another ratio of $2\frac{1}{2}$, making, in the case, his velocity and his vortical force ($2\frac{1}{2} \times 11 =$) 27 times her velocity and force.

"Then the planets' densities are inversely as their rotary periods; and their rotary velocities and degrees of centrifugal force are, other things being equal, directly as their densities.

"Two planets, revolving in one orbit, in rotating, would approach the Sun, therefore enlarge their rotary ellipses, therefore accelerate their rotary velocities, therefore increase their powers of withstanding the influence of the solar vortex, inversely according to the products of their diameters into their densities—that is, the smaller and less dense planet, having to resist an amount of influence equal to that resisted by the other, would multiply the number of its resisting springs by the ratio of the other's diameter and density to the diameter and density of itself. Thus, the Earth, in Jupiter's orbit, would have to rotate in an ellipse 27 times as broad as herself, in order to make her power correspond with his.

"Then the breadths, in a perpendicular direction, of the rotary ellipses of the planets in their several orbits are inversely as the products obtained by multiplying together the bodies' densities, diameters, and distances from the centre of the solar vortex. Thus, the product of Jupiter's density, diameter, and distance being ($2\frac{1}{2}$ times 11 times $5\frac{1}{4}$) 140 times the product of the Earth's density, diameter, and distance, the breadth of the latter's ellipse is about 1,120,000 miles; this upon the foundation, of course, that Jupiter's ellipse coincides precisely with his own equatorial diameter."

[Note by the editor. The last paragraph has been copied just as it stands. But the query arises whether the calculator in arriving at his conclusion, did not take, accidentally, one step off his premises. Is n't rotary velocity *inversely* according to distance? therefore should not the ratio of Jupiter's, to the Earth's, distance—$5\frac{1}{4}$—come in as a divisor, instead of a multiplier?]

"It will be observed that that process, in its last analysis, presents the point that rotary speed (hence that vortical force) is in exact inverse proportion to distance. Then, since the movement in orbit is a part of the rotary movement—being the rate at which the *centre of the rotary ellipse* is carried along the line marking the orbit,—and since that centre and the planet's centre are not identical, the former being the point around which the latter revolves, causing, by the act, a relative loss of time in the inverse ratio of the square root of distance, as I have shown back, the speed in orbit is inversely according to the square root of distance. Demonstration —The Earth's orbital period contains $365\frac{1}{4}$ of her rotary periods. During these periods her equator passes through a distance of ($1,120,000 \times \frac{22}{7} \times 365\frac{1}{4} =$) about 1,286 million miles; and the centre of her rotary ellipse, through a distance of ($95,000,000 \times 2 \times \frac{22}{7} =$) about 597 million miles. Jupiter's orbital period has ($365\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ years $=$) about 10,957 of his rotary periods, during which his equator courses ($88,000 \times \frac{22}{7} \times 10,957 =$) about 3,050 million miles; and the centre of his rotary ellipse, about the same number of miles ($490,000,000 \times 2 \times \frac{22}{7}$). Dividing this distance by 12 ($\frac{3,050,000,000}{12} =$) gives the length of Jupiter's *double* journey during one of the Earth's orbital periods $=$ 254 million miles. Relative velocities in ellipse ($\frac{1,286}{254} =$) 5 + to 1, which is inversely as the distances; and relative velocities in orbit ($\frac{597}{254} =$) 2 + to 1, inversely as the square roots of the distances.

"The Sun's period of rotation being 25 days, his density is only $\frac{1}{25}$ of that of a planet having a period of 24 hours—that of Mercury, for instance. Hence Mercury has, for the purpose now in view, virtually a diameter equal to a little more than $\frac{1}{12}$ of that of the Sun ($\frac{888,000}{25} = 35,520$; $\frac{35,520}{3,000} = 11,34 : \frac{888,000}{11,340} =$)—say, 75,000 miles.

"Here we have a conception of the planet in the *mid-stage*, so to speak of its condensation—after the breaking-up of the vaporous ring which was to produce it, and just at the taking-on of the globular form. But before the arrival at this stage, the figure was that of a *truck*, the vertical diameter of which is identifiable in the periphery of the globe ($75{,}000 \times \frac{22}{7} =$), 236 thousand miles. Half way down this diameter the body settled into its (original) orbit—rather, would have settled, had it been the only one, besides its parents, in the Solar system—an orbit distant from the Sun's equator ($\frac{236{,}000}{2} =$) 118,000 miles; and from the centre of the solar vortex ($118{,}000 + \frac{888{,}000}{2} =$), 562 thousand miles. To this are to be added, successively, the lengths of the semi-diameters of the *trucks* of Venus, of the Earth, and so on outward.

"There, the planets' *original* distances—rather, speaking strictly, the widths from the common centre to the outer limits of their rings of vapor—are pointed at. From these, as foundations, the present distances may be deduced. A simple outline of the process to the deduction is this: Neptune took his orbit first; then Uranus took his. The effect of the coming into closer conjunction of the two bodies was such as would have been produced by bringing each so much nearer the centre of the solar vortex. Each enlarged its rotary ellipse and increased its rotary velocity in the ratio of the decrease of distance. A secondary result—the *final* consequence—of the enlargement and the increase was the propulsion of each outward, the square root of the relative decrease being the measure of the length through which each was sent. The *primary* result, of course, was the drawing of each inward; and it is fairly presumable that there were oscillations inward and outward, outward and inward, during several successive periods of rotation. It is probable—at any rate, not glaringly improbable—that, in the oscillations across the remnants of the rings of vapor (the natural inference is that these were not *completely* gathered into the composition of the bodies), portions of the vapor were *whirled* into satellites, which followed in the passage outward.

"Saturn's ring (I have no allusion to the rings now existing), as well as that of each of the other planets after him, while it was being gradually cast off from the Sun's equator, was carried along in the track of its next predecessor, the distance here being the full quotient (not the square root of the quotient) found in dividing by the breadth to its own periphery, that to the periphery of the other. Thus, reckoning for Uranus a breadth of 17 million, and for Saturn one of 14 million miles, the latter (still in his vaporous state) was conducted outward (through a sort of capillary attraction) $\frac{14}{17}$ as far as the former (after condensation) was driven by means of the vortical influence of Neptune. The new body and the two older bodies *interchanged*

forces, and another advance outward (of all three) was made. Combining all of the asteroids into one of the *Nine Great Powers*, there were eight stages of the general movement away from the centre; and, granting that we have, exact, the diameters and the rotary periods (that is, the densities) of all of the participants in the movement, the measurement of each stage, by itself, and of all the stages together, can be calculated exactly.

"How will *that* do for a postscript?"

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION.

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says: "By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backward? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea—but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before any thing be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place: "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, per-

haps, the authorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrio*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of

decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven" as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing *a* poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and every thing like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *any thing* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a physical necessity, brief. For this reason, at

least one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose —a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe," (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect:—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem, a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impres-

sion, or effect, to be conveyed; and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul—not* of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to, is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far

more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me), which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from any thing here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation —and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so

universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation *of the application* of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary:

the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt; and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "Nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous reptition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by *a human* being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself: "Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death—was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—"When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty:* the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore." I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application.* I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply

"Nevermore"—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself—by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the *expected* "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query—that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer—that query in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here, then, the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover—and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanzas—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing.* The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition.

In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic —the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short: the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their *combination into stanza;* nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *cir-*

cumscription of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window, was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage

—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic —approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible —is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

> Not the *least obeisance made he*—not a moment stopped or stayed he,
> *But with mien of lord or lady*, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:—

> Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
> By the *grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore*,
> "Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven*, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
> Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore—
> Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"
> Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

> Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear discourse so plainly,
> Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
> For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
> *Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door—*
> *Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door*,
> With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most pro-

found seriousness:—this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

> But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees any thing even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement* which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, every thing is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming over a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of a bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student,

who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven, addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the render-

ing this the upper- instead of the under-current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

"Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen:

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore.

MARGINALIA.

IN getting my books, I have been always solicitous of an ample margin; this not so much through any love of the thing itself, however agreeble, as for the facility it affords me of pencilling suggested thoughts, agreements, and differences of opinion, or brief critical comments in general. Where what I have to note is too much to be included within the narrow limits of a margin, I commit it to a slip of paper, and deposit it between the leaves; taking care to secure it by an imperceptible portion of gum tragacanth paste.

All this may be whim; it may be not only a very hackneyed, but a very idle, practice;—yet I persist in it still; and it affords me pleasure; which is profit, in despite of Mr. Bentham with Mr. Mill on his back.

This making of notes, however, is by no means the making of mere *memoranda*—a custom which has its disadvantages, beyond doubt. "*Ce que je mets sur papier,*" says Bernardin de St. Pierre, "*je remets de ma mémoire, et par consequence je l'oublie*";—and, in fact, if you wish to forget any thing on the spot, make a note that this thing is to be remembered.

But the purely marginal jottings, done with no eye to the Memorandum-Book, have a distinct complexion, and not only a distinct purpose, but none at all; this it is which imparts to them a value. They have a rank somewhat above the chance and desultory comments of literary chit-chat—for these latter are not unfrequently "talk for talk's sake," hurried out of the mouth; while the *marginalia* are deliberately pencilled, because the mind of the reader wishes to unburthen itself of a *thought*—however flippant—however silly—however trivial—still a thought indeed not merely a thing that might have been a thought in time, and under more favorable circumstances. In the *marginalia*, too, we talk only to ourselves; we therefore talk freshly—boldly—originally—with *abandonnement*—without conceit—much after the fashion of Jeremy Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne, and Sir William Temple, and the anatomical Burton, and that most logical analogist, Butler, and some other people of the old day, who were too full of their matter to have any room for their manner, which being thus left out of question, was a capital manner, indeed—a model of manners, with a richly marginalic air.

The circumscription of space, too, in these pencillings, has in it something more of advantage than inconvenience. It compels us (whatever diffuseness of idea we may clandestinely entertain) into Montesquieu-ism, into Tacitus-ism, (here I leave out of view the concluding portion of the "Annals,")—or even into Carlyle-ism—a

thing which, I have been told, is not to be confounded with your ordinary affectation and bad grammar. I say "bad grammar," through sheer obstinacy, because the grammarians (who should know better) insist upon it that I should not. But then grammar is not what these grammarians will have it; and, being merely the analysis of language, with the result of this analysis, must be good or bad just as the analyst is sage or silly—just as he is a Horne Tooke or a Cobbett.

But to our sheep. During a rainy afternoon, not long ago, being in a mood too listless for continuous study, I sought relief from *ennui* in dipping here and there, at random, among the volumes of my library—no very large one, certainly, but sufficiently miscellaneous; and, I flatter myself, not a little *recherché*.

Perhaps it was what the Germans call the "brain-scattering" humor of the moment; but, while the picturesqueness of the numerous pencil-scratches arrested my attention, their helter-skelteriness of commentary amused me. I found myself, at length, forming a wish that it had been some other hand than my own which had so bedevilled the books, and fancying that, in such case, I might have derived no inconsiderable pleasure from turning them over. From this the transition-thought (as Mr. Lyell, or Mr. Murchison, or Mr. Featherstonhaugh would have it) was natural enough:—there might be something even in *my* scribblings which, for the mere sake of scribbling, would have interest for others.

The main difficulty respected the mode of transferring the notes from the volumes—the context from the text—without detriment to that exceedingly frail fabric of intelligibility in which the context was imbedded. With all appliances to boot, with the printed pages at their back, the commentaries were too often like Dodona's oracles—or those of Lycophron Tenebrosus—or the essays of the pedant's pupils, in "Quintillian," which were "necessarily excellent, since even he (the pedant) found it impossible to comprehend them":—what, then, would become of it—this context—if transferred?—if translated? Would it not rather be *traduit* (traduced) which is the French synonyme, or *overzezet* (turned topsy-turvy) which is the Dutch one?

I concluded, at length, to put extensive faith in the acumen and imagination of the reader:—this as a general rule. But, in some instances, where even faith would not remove mountains, there seemed no safer plan than so to re-model the note as to convey at least the ghost of a conception as to what it was all about. Where, for such conception, the text itself was absolutely necessary, I could quote it; where the title of the book commented upon was indispensable, I could name it. In short, like a novel-hero dilemma'd, I made up my mind "to be guided by circumstances," in default of more satisfactory rules of conduct.

As for the multitudinous opinion expressed in the subjoined *farrago*—as for my present assent to all, or dissent

from any portion of it—as to the possibility of my having, in some instances, altered my mind—or as to the impossibility of my not having altered it often—these are points upon which I say nothing, because upon these there can be nothing cleverly said. It may be as well to observe, however, that just as the goodness of your true pun is in the direct ratio of its intolerability, so is nonsense the essential sense of the Marginal Note.

I.

One of the happiest examples, in a small way, of the carrying-one's-self-in-a-hand-basket logic, is to be found in a London weekly paper called *The Popular Record of Modern Science; a Journal of Philosophy and General Information.* This work has a vast circulation, and is respected by eminent men. Some time in November, 1845, it copied from the *Columbian Magazine*, of New York, a rather adventurous article of mine, called "Mesmeric Revelation." It had the impudence, also, to spoil the title by improving it to "The Last Conversation of a Somnambule"—a phrase that is nothing at all to the purpose, since the person who "converses" is *not* a somnambule. He is a sleep-waker—*not* a sleep walker; but I presume that the *Record* thought it was only the difference of an *l*. What I chiefly complain of, however, is that the London editor prefaced my paper with these words: "The following is an article communicated to the *Columbian Magazine*, a journal of respectability and influ-

ence in the United States, by Mr. Edgar A. Poe. *It bears internal evidence of authenticity"!* There is no subject under heaven about which funnier ideas are, in general, entertained than about this subject of internal evidence. It is by "internal evidence," observe, that we decide upon the mind. But to the *Record*:—On the issue of my "Valdemar Case," this journal copies it, as a matter of course, and (also as a matter of course) improves the title, as in the previous instance. But the editorial comments may as well be called profound. Here they are:

The following narrative appears in a recent number of *The American Magazine*, a respectable periodical in the United States. It comes, it will be observed, from the narrator of the "Last Conversation of a Somnambule," published in *The Record* of the 29th of November. In extracting this case, the *Morning Post*, of Monday last, takes what it considers the safe side, by remarking—"For our own parts we do not believe it; and there are several statements made, more especially with regard to the disease of which the patient died, which at once prove the case to be either a fabrication, or the work of one little acquainted with consumption. The story, however, is wonderful, and we therefore give it." The editor, however, does not point out the especial statements which are inconsistent with what we know of the progress of consumption, and as few scientific persons would be willing to take their pathology any more than their logic from the *Morning Post*, his caution, it is to be feared, will not have much weight. The reason assigned by the *Post* for publishing the account is

quaint, and would apply equally to an adventure from "Baron Munchausen":—"it is wonderful, and we therefore give it." * * * The above case is obviously one that cannot be received except on the strongest testimony, and it is equally clear that the testimony by which it is at present accompanied, is not of that character. The most favorable circumstances in support of it, consist in the fact that credence is understood to be given to it at New York, within a few miles of which city the affair took place, and where consequently the most ready means must be found for its authentication or disproval. The initials of the medical men and of the young medical student must be sufficient in the immediate locality, to establish their identity, especially as M. Valdemar was well known, and had been so long ill as to render it out of the question that there should be any difficulty in ascertaining the names of the physicians by whom he had been attended. In the same way the nurses and servants under whose cognizance the case must have come during the seven months which it occupied, are of course accessible to all sorts of inquiries. It will, therefore, appear that there must have been too many parties concerned to render prolonged deception practicable. The angry excitement and various rumors which have at length rendered a public statement necessary, are also sufficient to show that *something* extraordinary must have taken place. On the other hand, there is no strong point for disbelief. The circumstances are, as the *Post* says, "wonderful"; but so are all circumstances that come to our knowledge for the first time—and in Mesmerism every thing is new. An objection may be made that the article has rather a Magazinish air; Mr. Poe

having evidently written with a view to effect, and so as to excite rather than to subdue the vague appetite for the mysterious and the horrible which such a case, under any circumstances, is sure to awaken—but apart from this there is nothing to deter a philosophic mind from further inquiries regarding it. It is a matter entirely for testimony. [So it is.] Under this view we shall take steps to procure from some of the most intelligent and influential citizens of New York all the evidence that can be had upon the subject. No steamer will leave England for America till the 3d of February, but within a few weeks of that time we doubt not it will be possible to lay before the readers of the *Record* information which will enable them to come to a pretty accurate conclusion.

Yes; and no doubt they came to one accurate enough, in the end. But all this rigmarole is what people call testing a thing by "internal evidence." The *Record* insists upon the truth of the story because of certain facts —because "the initials of the young men *must* be sufficient to establish their identity"—because "the nurses *must* be accessible to all sorts of inquiries"—and because the "angry excitement and various rumors which at length rendered a public statement necessary, are sufficient to show that *something* extraordinary *must* have taken place." To be sure! The story is proved by these facts—the facts about the students, the nurses, the excitement, the credence given the tale in New York, And now all we have to do is to prove these facts. Ah!—*they* are proved *by the story*. As for the *Morning Post*, it

evinces more weakness in its disbelief than the *Record* in its credulity. What the former says about doubting on account of inaccuracy in the details of the phthisical symptoms, is a mere *fetch*, as the Cockneys have it, in order to make a very few little children believe that it, the *Post*, is not quite so stupid as a post proverbially is. It knows nearly as much about pathology as it does about English grammar—and I really hope it will not feel called upon to blush at the compliment. I represented the symptoms of M. Valdemar as "severe," to be sure. I put an extreme case; for it was necessary that I should leave on the reader's mind no doubt as to the certainty of death without the aid of the Mesmerist—but such symptoms *might* have appeared—the identical symptoms *have appeared*, and will be presented again and again. Had the *Post* been only half as honest as ignorant, it would have owned that it disbelieved for no reason more profound than that which influences all dunces in disbelieving—it would have owned that it doubted the thing merely because the thing was a "wonderful" thing, and had never yet been printed in a book.

II.

We mere men of the world, with no principle—a very old-fashioned and cumbersome thing—should be on our guard lest, fancying him on his last legs, we insult, or otherwise maltreat, some poor devil of a genius at the very instant of his putting his foot on the top round of

his ladder of triumph. It is a common trick with these fellows, when on the point of attaining some long-cherished end, to sink themselves into the deepest possible abyss of seeming despair, for no other purpose than that of increasing the space of success through which they have made up their minds immediately to soar.

III.

Mr. Hudson, among innumerable blunders, attributes to Sir Thomas Browne the paradox of Tertullian in his "*De Carne Christi*"—"*Mortuus est Dei filius, credible est quia ineptum est; et sepultus resurrexit, certum est quia impossibile est.*"

IV.

After reading all that has been written, and after thinking all that can be thought, on the topics of God and the soul, the man who has a right to say that he thinks at all will find himself face to face with the conclusion that, on these topics, the most profound thought is that which can be the least easily distinguished from the most superficial sentiment.

V.

That punctuation is important all agree; but how few comprehend the extent of its importance! The writer who neglects punctuation, or mis-punctuates, is liable to be misunderstood—this, according to the popular idea, is the sum of the evils arising from heedlessness or ignorance. It does not seem to be known that, even where the sense is perfectly clear, a sentence may be deprived of

half its force—its spirit—its point—by improper punctuations. For the want of merely a comma, it often occurs than an axiom appears a paradox, or that a sarcasm is converted into a sermonoid. There is *no* treatise on the topic—and there is no topic on which a treatise is more needed. There seems to exist a vulgar notion that the subject is one of pure conventionality, and cannot be brought within the limits of intelligible and consistent *rule*. And yet, if fairly looked in the face, the whole matter is so plain that its *rationale* may be read as we run. If not anticipated, I shall, hereafter, make an attempt at a magazine paper on "The Philosophy of Point." In the mean time let me say a word or two of *the dash*. Every writer for the press, who has any sense of the accurate, must have been frequently mortified and vexed at the distortion of his sentences by the printer's now general substitution of a semicolon, or comma, for the dash of the MS. The total or nearly total disuse of the latter point, has been brought about by the revulsion consequent upon its excessive employment about twenty years ago. The Byronic poets were *all* dash. John Neal, in his earlier novels, exaggerated its use into the grossest abuse—although his very error arose from the philosophical and self-dependent spirit which has always distinguished him, and which will even yet lead him, if I am not greatly mistaken in the man, to do something for the literature of the country which the country "will not willingly," and cannot possibly, "let die." Without entering now into

the *why*, let me observe that the printer may always ascertain when the dash of the MS. is properly and when improperly employed, by bearing in mind that this point represents *a second thought—an emendation.* In using it just above I have exemplified its use. The words, "an emendation," are, speaking with reference to grammatical construction, put in *ap*position with the words, "a second thought." Having written these latter words, I reflected whether it would not be possible to render their meaning more distinct by certain other words. Now, instead of erasing the phrase, "a second thought," which is of *some* use—which *partially* conveys the idea intended—which advances me *a step toward* my full purpose,—I suffer it to remain, and merely put a dash between it and the phrase, "an emendation." The dash gives the reader a choice between two, or among three or more expressions, one of which may be more forcible than another, but all of which help out the idea. It stands, in general, for these words—"*or, to make my meaning more distinct.*" This force *it has*—and this force no other point can have; since all other points have well-understood uses quite different from this. Therefore, the dash *cannot* be dispensed with. It has its phases—its variation of the force described; but the one principle—that of second thought or emendation—will be found at the bottom of all.

VI.

Diana's Temple at Ephesus having been burnt on the night in which Alexander was born, some person ob-

served that "it was no wonder, since, at the period of the conflagration, she was gossiping at Pella." Cicero commends this as a witty conceit—Plutarch condemns it as senseless—and this is the one point in which I agree with the biographer.

VII.

Until we analyze a religion, or a philosophy, in respect of its inducements, independently of its rationality, we shall never be in condition to estimate that religion, or that philosophy, by the mere *number* of its adherents:—unluckily,

> No Indian Prince has to his palace
> More followers than a thief to the gallows.

VIII.

"If in any point," says Lord Bacon, "I have receded from what is commonly received, it hath been for the purpose of proceeding *melius* and not *in aliud*"—but the character assumed, in general, by modern "Reform" is, simply, that of Opposition.

IX.

A strong argument for the religion of Christ is this—that offences against *Charity* are about the only ones which men on their death-beds can be made—not to understand—but to *feel*—as *crime*.

X.

The effect derivable from well-managed rhyme is very imperfectly understood. Conventionally "rhyme" im-

plies merely close similarity of sound at the ends of verse, and it is really curious to observe how long mankind have been content with their limitation of the idea. What, in rhyme, first and principally pleases, may be referred to the human sense or appreciation of *equality*—the common element, as might be easily shown, of all the gratification we derive from music in its most extended sense—very especially in its modifications of metre and rhythm. We see, for example, a crystal, and are immediately interested by the equality between the sides and angles of one of its faces—but, on bringing to view a second face, in all respects similar to the first, our pleasure seems to be *squared*—on bringing to view a third, it appears to be *cubed*, and so on: I have no doubt, indeed, that the delight experienced, if measurable, would be found to have exact mathematical relations such, or nearly such, as I suggest—that is to say, as far as a certain point, beyond which there would be a decrease, in similar relations. Now here, as the ultimate result of analysis, we reach the sense of mere *equality*, or rather the human delight in this sense; and it was an instinct, rather than a clear comprehension of this delight as a principle, which, in the first instance, led the poet to attempt an increase of the effect arising from the mere similarity (that is to say, equality) between two sounds—led him, I say, to attempt increasing the effect by making a secondary equalization, in placing the rhymes at equal distances—that is, at the ends of lines of equal length. In this manner rhyme

and the termination of the line grew connected in men's thoughts—grew into a conventionalism—the principle being lost sight of altogether. And it was simply because Pindaric verses had, before this epoch, existed—*i. e.*, verses of unequal length—that rhymes were subsequently found at unequal distances. It was for this reason solely, I say—for none more profound. Rhyme had come to be regarded as of right appertaining to the *end* of verse—and here we complain that the matter has finally rested. But it is clear that there was much more to be considered. So far, the sense of *equality* alone entered the effect; or, if this equality was slightly varied, it was varied only through an accident—the accident of the existence of Pindaric metres. It will be seen that the rhymes were always *anticipated.* The eye, catching the end of a verse, whether long or short, expected, for the ear, a rhyme. The great element of unexpectedness was not dreamed of—that is to say, of novelty—of originality. "But," says Lord Bacon, (how justly!) "there is no exquisite beauty without some *strangeness* in the proportions." Take away this element of strangeness—of unexpectedness—of novelty—of originality—call it what we will—and all that is *ethereal* in loveliness is lost at once. We lose—we miss the *unknown*—the vague—the uncomprehended because offered before we have time to examine and comprehend. We lose, in short, all that assimilates the beauty of earth with what we dream of the beauty of Heaven. Perfection of rhyme is attainable

only in the combination of the two elements, Equality and Unexpectedness. But as evil cannot exist without good, so unexpectedness must arise from expectedness. We do not contend for mere *arbitrariness* of rhyme. In the first place, we must have equi-distant or regularly recurring rhymes, to form the basis, expectedness, out of which arises the element, unexpectedness, by the introduction of rhymes, not arbitrarily, but with an eye to the greatest amount of unexpectedness. We should not introduce them, for example, at such points that the entire line is a multiple of the syllables preceding the points. When, for instance, I write—

> And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain,

I produce more, to be sure, but not remarkably more, than the ordinary effect of rhymes regularly recurring at the ends of lines; for the number of syllables in the whole verse is merely a multiple of the number of syllables preceding the rhyme introduced at the middle, and there is still left, therefore, a certain degree of expectedness. What there is of the element, unexpectedness, is addressed, in fact, to the eye only—for the ear divides the verse into two ordinary lines, thus:

> And the silken, sad, uncertain
> Rustling of each purple curtain.

I obtain, however, the whole effect of unexpectedness, when I write—

Thrilled me, *filled* me with fantastic terrors never felt before.

N. B. It is very commonly supposed that rhyme, as it now ordinarily exists, is of modern invention—but see the "Clouds" of Aristophanes. Hebrew verse, however, did *not* include it—the terminations of the lines, where most distinct, never showing any thing of the kind.

XI.

Paulus Jovius, living in those benighted times when diamond-pointed styluses were as yet unknown, thought proper, nevertheless, to speak of his goose-quill as "*aliquando ferreus, aureus aliquando*"—intending, of course, a mere figure of speech; and from the class of modern authors who use really nothing to write with but steel and gold, some, no doubt, will let their pens, *vice versâ*, descend to posterity under the designation of "anserine"—of course, intending always a mere figure of speech.

XII.

The Carlyle-ists should adopt, as a motto, the inscription on the old bell from whose metal was cast the Great Tom, of Oxford:—"In *Thomæ* laude resono 'Bim! Bom!' sine fraude":—and "Bim! Bom," in such case, would be a marvellous "echo of sound to sense."

XIII.

An infinity of error makes its way into our Philosophy, through Man's habit of considering himself a citizen of a world solely—of an individual planet—instead of at least

occasionally contemplating his position as cosmopolite proper—as a denizen of the universe.

XIV.

Talking of puns:—"Why do they not give us quail for dinner, as usual?" demanded Count Fessis, the other day, of H——, the classicist and sportsman.

"Because at this season," replied H——, who was dozing,— "*qualis sopor fessis.*" (Quail is so poor, Fessis.)

XV.

The German "*Schwarmerei*"—not exactly "humbug," but "sky-rocketing"—seems to be the only term by which we can conveniently designate that peculiar style of criticism which has lately come into fashion, through the influence of certain members of the *Fabian* family—people who live (upon beans) about Boston.

XVI.

Some Frenchman—possibly Montaigne—says: "People talk about thinking, but for my part I never think, except when I sit down to write." It is this never thinking, unless when we sit down to write, which is the cause of so much indifferent composition. But perhaps there is something more involved in the Frenchman's observation than meets the eye. It is certain that the mere act of inditing, tends, in a great degree, to the logicalization of thought. Whenever, on account of its vagueness, I am dissatisfied with a conception of the brain, I resort forth-

with to the pen, for the purpose of obtaining, through its aid, the necessary form, consequence, and precision.

How very commonly we hear it remarked, that such and such thoughts are beyond the compass of words! I do not believe that any thought, properly so called, is out of the reach of language. I fancy, rather, that where difficulty in expression is experienced, there is, in the intellect which experiences it, a want either of deliberateness or of method. For my own part, I have never had a thought which I could not set down in words, with even more distinctness than that with which I conceived it:—as I have before observed, the thought is logicalized by the effort at (written) expression. There is, however, a class of fancies, of exquisite delicacy, which are *not* thoughts, and to which, *as yet*, I have found it absolutely impossible to adapt language. I use the word *fancies* at random, and merely because I must use *some* word; but the idea commonly attached to the term is not even remotely applicable to the shadows of shadows in question. They seem to me rather psychal than intellectual. They arise in the soul (alas, how rarely!) only at its epochs of most intense tranquillity—when the bodily and mental health are in perfection—and at those mere points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams. I am aware of these "fancies" only when I am upon the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that I am so. I have satisfied myself that this condition exists but for an inappreciable *point* of time

—yet it is crowded with these "shadows of shadows"; and for absolute *thought* there is demanded time's *endurance*. These "fancies" have in them a pleasurable ecstacy, as far beyond the most pleasurable of the world of wakefulness, or of dreams, as the heaven of the Northman theology is beyond its hell. I regard the visions, even as they arise, with an awe which, in some measure, moderates or tranquillizes the ecstacy—I so regard them, through a conviction (which seems a portion of the ecstacy itself) that this ecstacy, in itself, is of a character supernal to the human nature—is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world; and I arrive at this conclusion—if this term is at all applicable to instantaneous intuition by a perception that the delight experienced has, as its element, but *the absoluteness of novelty*. I say the absoluteness—for in these fancies—let me now term them psychal impressions —there is really nothing even approximate in character to impressions ordinarily received. It is as if the five senses were supplanted by five myriad others alien to mortality.

Now, so entire is my faith in the *power of words*, that, at times, I have believed it possible to embody even the evanescence of fancies such as I have attempted to describe. In experiments with this end in view, I have proceeded so far as, first, to control (when the bodily and mental health are good) the existence of the condition—that is to say, I can now (unless when ill) be sure that the condition will supervene, if I so wish it, at the point of

time already described—of its supervention, until lately, I could never be certain, even under the most favorable circumstances. I mean to say, merely, that now I can be sure, when all circumstances are favorable, of the supervention of the condition, and feel even the capacity of inducing or compelling it:—the favorable circumstances, however, are not the less rare—else had I compelled, already, the heaven into the earth.

I have proceeded so far, secondly, as to prevent the lapse from *the point* of which I speak—the point of blending between wakefulness and sleep,—as to prevent at will, I say, the lapse from this border-ground into the dominion of sleep. Not that I can *continue* the condition—not that I can render the point more than a point—but that I can startle myself from the point into wakefulness; *and thus transfer the point itself into the realm of Memory;* convey its impressions, or more properly their recollections, to a situation where (although still for a very brief period) I can survey them with the eye of analysis. For these reasons—that is to say, because I have been enabled to accomplish thus much—I do not altogether despair of embodying in words at least enough of the fancies in question to convey, to certain classes of intellect, a shadowy conception of their character. In saying this I am not to be understood as supposing that the fancies, or psychal impressions, to which I allude, are confined to my individual self—are not, in a word, common to all mankind—for on this point it is quite impossible that I should

form an opinion—but nothing can be more certain than that even a partial record of the impressions would startle the universal intellect of mankind, by the *supremeness of the novelty* of the material employed, and of its consequent suggestions. In a word, should I ever write a paper on this topic, the world will be compelled to acknowledge that, at last, I have done an original thing.

XVII.

In the way of original, striking, and well-sustained metaphor, we can call to mind few finer things than this —to be found in James Puckle's "Gray Cap for a Green Head": "In speaking of the dead, so fold up your discourse that their virtues may be outwardly shown, while their vices are wrapped up in silence."

XVIII.

Talking of inscriptions—how admirable was the one circulated at Paris, for the equestrian statue of Louis XV., done by Pigal and Bouchardon—"*Statua Statuæ.*"

XIX.

"This is right," says Epicurus, "precisely because the people are displeased with it."

"*Il y a à parier*," says Chamfort—one of the *Kamkars of* Mirabeau—"*que toute idée publique—toute convention reçue—est une sottise car elle a convenue au plus grand nombre.*"

"*Si proficere cupis*," says the great African bishop,

"*primo id verum puta quod sana mens omnium hominum attestatur.*"

Now,

Who shall decide where Doctors disagree?

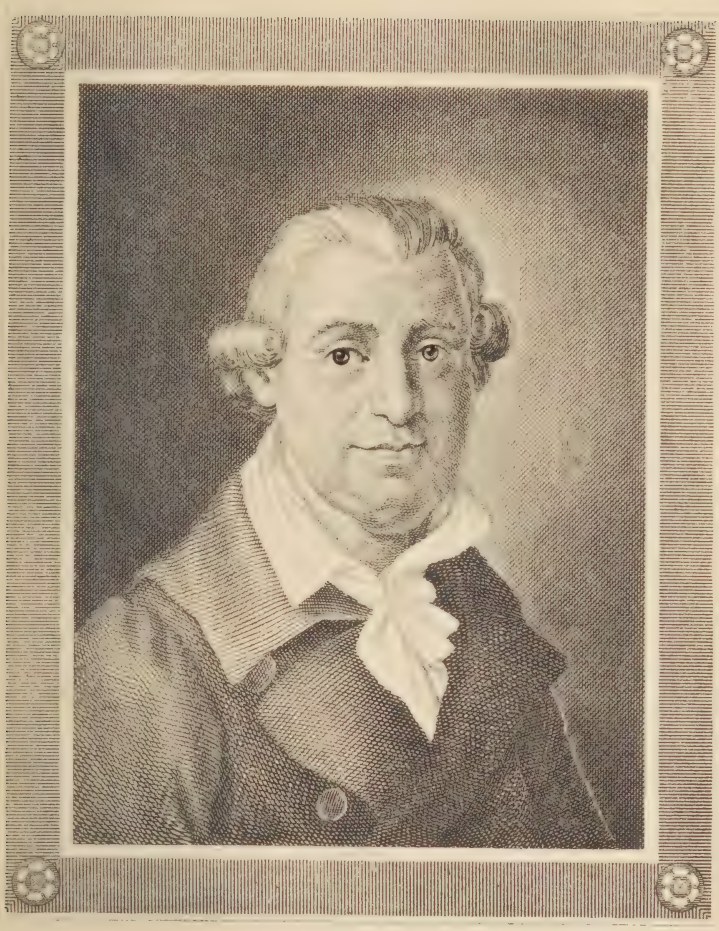
To me it appears that in all ages, the *most* preposterous falsities have been received as truths by at least the *mens* omnium hominum. As for the *sana* mens—how are we ever to determine what that is?

XX.

This book * could never have been popular out of Germany. It is too simple—too direct—too obvious—too *bold*—not sufficiently complex—to be relished by any people who have *thoroughly* passed the first (or impulsive) epoch of literary civilization. The Germans have not yet passed this first epoch. It must be remembered that *during the whole of the Middle Ages they lived in utter ignorance of the art of writing*. From so total a darkness, of so late a date, they could not, *as a nation*, have as yet fully emerged into the second or critical epoch. Individual Germans have been critical in the best sense—but the masses are unleavened. Literary Germany thus presents the singular spectacle of the impulsive spirit sursounded by the critical, and, of course, in some measure influenced thereby. England, for example, has advanced far, and France much farther, into the critical epoch; and their effect on the German mind is seen in the wildly

* "Thiodolf, the Icelander and Aslauga's Knight." No. 60 of Wiley & Putnam's Foreign Series of "The Library of Choice Reading."

anomalous condition of the German literature at large. That this latter will be improved by age, however, should never be maintained. As the impulsive spirit subsides, and the critical uprises, there will appear the polished insipidity of the later England, or that ultimate *throe* of taste which has found its best exemplification in Sue. At present the German literature resembles no other on the face of the earth—for it is the result of certain conditions which, before this individual instance of their fulfilment, have never been fulfilled. And this anomalous state to which I refer is the source of our anomalous criticism upon what that state produces—is the source of the grossly conflicting opinions about German letters. For my own part, I admit the German vigor, the German directness, boldness, imagination, and some other qualities of impulse, just as I am willing to admit and admire these qualities in the first (or impulsive) epochs of British and French letters. At the German criticism, however, I cannot refrain from laughing all the more heartily, all the more seriously I hear it praised. Not that, in detail, it affects me as an absurdity—but in the adaptation of its details. It abounds in brilliant bubbles of *suggestion*, but these rise and sink and jostle each other, until the whole vortex of thought in which they originate is one indistinguishable chaos of froth. The German criticism is *unsettled*, and can only be settled by time. At present it suggests without demonstrating, or convincing, or affecting any definite purpose under the sun. We read it, rub our



foreheads, and ask "What then?" I am not ashamed to say that I prefer even Voltaire to Goethe, and hold Macaulay to possess more of the true critical spirit than Augustus William and Frederick Schlegel combined. "Thiodolf" is called by Foqué his "most *successful* work." He would not have spoken thus had he considered it his *best*. It is admirable of its kind—but its kind can *never* be appreciated by Americans. It will affect them much as would a grasp of the hand from a man of ice. Even the exquisite "Undine" is too chilly for our people, and, generally, for our epoch. We have less imagination and warmer sympathies than the age which preceded us. It would have done Foqué more ready and fuller justice than ours. Has any one remarked the striking similarity in tone between "Undine" and the "Libussa" of Musœus?

XXI.

What can be more soothing, at once to a man's Pride and to his Conscience, than the conviction that, in taking vengeance on his enemies for *in*justice done him, he has simply to do them *justice* in return?

XXII.

Bielfeld, the author of "*Les Premiers Traits de l'Erudition Universelle*," defines poetry as "*l'art d'exprimer les pensées par la fiction.*" The Germans have two words in full accordance with this definition, absurd as it is—the terms *Dichtkunst*, the art of fiction, and *Dichten*, to feign

—which are generally used for poetry and to make verses.

XXIII.

Brown, in his "Amusements," speaks of having transfused the blood of an ass into the veins of an astrological quack—and there can be no doubt that one of Hague's progenitors was the man.

XXIV.

The chief portion of Professor Espy's theory has been anticipated by Roger Bacon.

XXV.

Whatever may be the merits or demerits, generally, of the Magazine Literature of America, there can be no question as to its extent or influence. The Topic, Magazine Literature, is therefore an important one. In a few years its importance will be found to have increased in geometrical ratio. The whole tendency of the age is Magazineward. The Quarterly Reviews have *never* been popular. Not only are they too stilted, (by way of keeping up a due dignity), but they make a point, with the same end in view, of discussing only topics which are *caviare* to the many, and which, for the most part, have only a conventional interest even with the few. Their issues, also, are at too long intervals; their subjects get cold before being served up. In a word, their ponderosity is quite out of keeping with the *rush* of the age. We now demand the light artillery of the intellect; we need the curt, the con-

densed, the pointed, the readily diffused—in place of the verbose, the detailed, the voluminous, the inaccessible. On the other hand, the lightness of the artillery should not degenerate into pop-gunnery—by which term we may designate the character of the greater portion of the newspaper press—their sole legitimate object being the discussion of ephemeral matters in an ephemeral manner. Whatever talent may be brought to bear upon our daily journals, and in many cases this talent is very great, still the imperative necessity of catching, *currente calamo*, each topic as it flits before the eye of the public, must of course materially narrow the limits of their power. The bulk and the period of issue of the monthly magazines, seem to be precisely adapted, if not to all the literary wants of the day, at least to the largest and most imperative as well as the most consequential portion of them.

XXVI.

My friend —— can never commence what he fancies a poem (he *is* a fanciful man, after all) without first elaborately "invoking the Muses." Like so many she-dogs of John of Nivelles, however, the more he invokes them, the more they decline obeying the invocation.

XXVII.

The nose of a mob is its imagination. By this, at any time, it can be quietly led.

XXVIII.

There lies a deep and sealed well
Within yon leafy forest hid,

Whose pent and lonely waters swell
Its confines chill and drear amid.

This putting the adjective after the noun is merely an inexcusable Gallicism; but the putting the preposition after the noun is alien to all language, and in opposition to all its principles. Such things, in general, serve only to betray the versifier's poverty of resource; and, when an inversion of this kind occurs, we say to ourselves: "Here the poet lacked the skill to make out his line without distorting the natural or colloquial order of the words." Now and then, however, we must refer the error not to deficiency of skill, but to something far less defensible—to an idea that such things belong to the essence of poetry—that it needs them to distinguish it from prose—that we are poetical, in a word, very much in the ratio of our unprosaicalness at these points. Even while employing the phrase "poetic license,"—a phrase which has to answer for an infinity of sins,—people who think in this way seem to have an indistinct conviction that the license in question *involves a necessity of being adopted.* The true artist will avail himself of no "license" whatever. The very word will disgust him; for it says: "Since you seem unable to manage without these peccadillo advantages, you must have them, I suppose; and the world, half-shutting its eyes, will do its best not to see the awkwardness which they stamp upon your poem."

Few things have greater tendency than inversion, to render verse feeble and ineffective. In most cases where

a line is spoken of as "forcible," the force may be referred to directness of expression. A vast majority of the passages which have become household through frequent quotation, owe their popularity either to this directness, or, in general, to the scorn of "poetic license." In short, as regards verbal construction, *the more prosaic* a poetical style is, the better. Through this species of prosaicism, Cowper, with scarcely one of the higher poetical elements, came very near making his age fancy him the equal of Pope; and to the same cause are attributable three-fourths of that unusual point and force for which Moore is distinguished. It is the *prosaicism* of these two writers to which is owing their especial *quotability.*

XXIX.

The Reverend Arthur Coxe's "Saul, a Mystery," having been condemned in no measured terms by Poe, of *The Broadway Journal*, and Green, of *The Emporium*, a writer in the *Hartford Columbian* retorts as follows:

An entertaining history,
Entitled "Saul, a Mystery,"
Has recently been published by the Reverend Arthur Coxe.
The poem is dramatic,
And the wit of it is attic,
And its teachings are emphatic of the doctrines orthodox

But Mr. Poe, the poet,
Declares he cannot go it—
That the book is very stupid, or something of that sort:
And Green, of the *Empori-*
Um, tells a kindred story,
And swears like any tory that it is n't worth a groat.

But maugre all the croaking
Of the Raven and the joking
Of the verdant little fellew of the used to be review,
The People, in derision
Of their impudent decision,
Have declared, without division, that the Mystery will do.

The *truth*, of course, rather injures an epigram than otherwise; and nobody will think the worse of the one above, when I say that, at the date of its first appearance, I had expressed *no opinion whatever* of the poem to which it refers. "Give a dog a bad name," etc. Whenever a book is abused, people take it for granted that it is *I* who have been abusing it.

Latterly I *have* read "Saul," and agree with the epigrammatist, that it "will do"—whoever attempts to wade through it. It will do, also, for trunk-paper. The author is right in calling it "A Mystery,"—for a most unfathomable mystery it is. When I got to the end of it, I found it more mysterious than ever—and it was really a mystery how I ever did get to the end—which I half fancied that somebody had cut off, in a fit of ill-will to the critics. I have heard not a syllable about the "Mystery," of late days. "The People" seem to have forgotten it; and Mr. Coxe's friends should advertise it under the head of "Mysterious Disappearance"—that is to say, the disappearance of a Mystery.

XXX.

The *vox populi*, so much talked about to so little purpose, is, possibly, that very *vox et preterea nihil* which the countryman, in Catullus, mistook for a nightingale.

XXXI.

The *pure Imagination* chooses, from *either Beauty or Deformity*, only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined; the compound, as a general rule, partaking, in character of beauty or sublimity, in the ratio of the respective beauty or sublimity of the things combined—which are themselves still to be considered as atomic—that is to say, as previous combinations. But, as often analogously happens in physical chemistry, so not unfrequently does it occur in this chemistry of the intellect, that the admixture of two elements results in a something that has nothing of the qualities of one of them, or even nothing of the qualities of either. * * * Thus, the range of Imagination is unlimited. Its materials extend throughout the universe. Even out of deformities it fabricates that *Beauty* which is at once its sole object and its inevitable test. But, in general, the richness or force of the matters combined, the facility of discovering combinable novelties worth combining, and, especially, the absolute "chemical combination" of the completed mass, are the particulars to be regarded in our estimate of Imagination. It is this thorough harmony of an imaginative work which so often causes it to be undervalued by the thoughtless, through the character of *obviousness* which is superinduced. We are apt to find ourselves asking *why* it is that these combinations have never been imagined before.

XXXII.

In examining trivial details, we are apt to overlook essential generalities. Thus M——, in making a to-do about the "typographical mistakes" in his book, has permitted the printer to escape a scolding which he *did* richly deserve—a scolding for a "typographical mistake" of really vital importance—the mistake of having printed the book at all.

XXXIII.

It has been well said of the French orator, Dupin, that "he spoke, as nobody else, the language of everybody"; and thus his manner seems to be exactly conversed in that of the Frogpondian Euphuists, who, on account of the familiar tone in which they lisp their *outré* phrases, may be said to speak, as everybody, the language of nobody—that is to say, a language emphatically their own.

XXXIV.

He (Bulwer) is the most accomplished writer of the most accomplished era of English Letters; practising all styles and classes of composition, and eminent in all—novelist, dramatist, poet, historian, moral philosopher, essayist, critic, political pamphleteer;—in each superior to all others, and only rivalled in each by himself.—*Ward, author of "Tremaine."*

The "only rivalled in each by himself" here, puts me in mind of

None but himself can be his parallel.

But surely Mr. Ward (who, although he did write "De

E. L. Bulwer

Vere," is by no means a fool) could never have put to paper, in his sober senses, any thing so absurd as the paragraph quoted above, without stopping at every third word to hold his sides, or thrust his pocket-handkerchief into his mouth. If the serious intention be insisted upon, however, I have to remark that the opinion is the *mere* opinion of a writer remarkable for no other good trait than his facility at putting his readers to sleep according to rules Addisonian, and with the least possible loss of labor and time. But as the *mere* opinion of even a Jeffrey or a Macaulay, I have an inalienable right to meet it with another.

As a novelist, then, Bulwer is far more than respectable; although *generally* inferior to Scott, Godwin, D'Israeli, Miss Burney, Sue, Dumas, Dickens, the author of "Ellen Wareham," and the author of "Jane Eyre," and several others. From the list of foreign novels I could select a hundred which he could neither have written nor conceived. As a dramatist, he deserves more credit, although he receives less. His "Richelieu," "Money," and "Lady of Lyons" have done much in the way of opening the public eyes to the true value of what is superciliously termed "stage effect" in the hands of one able to manage it. But if commendable at this point, his dramas fail egregiously in points more important; so that, upon the whole, he can be said to have written a good play only when we think of him in connection with the still more contemptible "old-dramatist" imitators

who are his contemporaries and friends. As historian, he is sufficiently dignified, sufficiently ornate, and more than sufficiently self-sufficient. His "Athens" would have received an Etonian prize, and has all the happy air of an Etonian prize-essay re-vamped. His political pamphlets are very good as political pamphlets and very disreputable as any thing else. His essays leave no doubt upon anybody's mind that, with the writer, they have been essays indeed. His criticism is really beneath contempt. His moral philosophy is the most ridiculous of all the modern philosophies that ever have been imagined upon earth.

"The men of sense," says Helvetius, "those idols of the unthinking, are very far inferior to the men of passions. It is the strong passions which, rescuing us from sloth, can alone impart to us that continuous and earnest attention necessary to great intellectual efforts."

When the Swiss philosopher here speaks of "inferiority," he refers to inferiority in worldly success; by "men of sense" he intends indolent men of genius. And Bulwer is, emphatically, one of the "men of passions" contemplated in the apothegm. His passions, with opportunities, have made him what he is. Urged by a rabid ambition to do much, in doing nothing he would merely have proved himself an idiot. Something he has done. In aiming at Crichton, he has hit the target an inch or two above Harrison Ainsworth. Not to such intellects belong the honors of universality. His works bear about

them the unmistakable indications of mere talent—talent, I grant, of an unusual order, and nurtured to its extreme of development with a very tender and elaborate care. Nevertheless, it is talent still. Genius it is not.

And the proof is, that while we often fancy ourselves about to be enkindled beneath its influence, fairly enkindled we never are. That Bulwer is no *poet*, follows as a corollary from what has been already said; for to speak of a poet without genius, is merely to put forth a flat contradiction in terms.

XXXV.

In the tale proper—where there is no space for development of character or for great profusion and variety of incident—mere *construction* is, of course, far more imperatively demanded than in the novel. Defective plot, in this latter, may escape observation, but in the tale, never. Most of our tale-writers, however, neglect the distinction. They seem to begin their stories without knowing how they are to end; and their ends, generally,—like so many governments of Trinculo,—appear to have forgotten their beginnings.

XXXVI.

Quaintness, within reasonable limits, is not only *not* to be regarded as affectation, but has its proper uses, in aiding a fantastic effect. Miss Barrett will afford me two examples. In some lines to a Dog, she says:

> Leap! thy broad tail waves a light.
> Leap, thy slender feet are bright,
> Canopied in fringes.

Leap ! those tasselled ears of thine
Flicker strangely fair and fine
Down their golden inches.

And again—in the "Song of a Tree-Spirit."

The Divine impulsion cleaves
In dim movements to the leaves
Dropt and lifted—dropt and lifted—
In the sun-light greenly sifted,—
In the sun-light and the moon-light
Greenly sifted through the trees.
Ever wave the Eden trees
In the night-light and the moon-light,
With a ruffling of green branches
Shaded off to resonances
Never stirred by rain or breeze.

The thoughts here belong to a high order of poetry, but could not have been wrought into effective expression, without the aid of those repetitions—those unusual phrases—those *quaintnesses*, in a word, which it has been too long the fashion to censure, indiscriminately, under the one general head of "affectation." No poet will fail to be pleased with the two extracts I have here given; but no doubt there are some who will find it hard to reconcile the psychal impossibility of refraining from admiration, with the too-hastily attained mental conviction that, critically, there is nothing to admire.

XXXVII.

Mozart declared, on his death-bed, that he "began to see what *may* be done in music"; and it is to be hoped that De Meyer and the rest of the spasmodists will, even-

tually, begin to understand what may *not* be done in this particular branch of the Fine Arts.

XXXVIII.

For my part I agree with Joshua Barnes; nobody but Solomon could have written the Iliad. The catalogue of ships was the work of Robins.

XXXIX.

In Colton's *American Review* for October, 1845, a gentleman, well known for his scholarship, has a forcible paper on "The Scotch School of Philosophy and Criticism." But although the paper is "forcible," it presents the most singular admixture of error and truth—the one dovetailed into the other, after a fashion which is novel to say the least of it. Were I to designate in a few words what the whole article demonstrated, I should say "the folly of not beginning at the beginning—of neglecting the giant Moulineau's advice to his friend Ram." Here is a passage from the essay in question:

The Doctors [Campbell and Johnson] both charge Pope with error and inconsistency:—error in supposing that *in English*, of metrical lines unequal in the number of syllables and pronounced in equal times, the longer suggests celerity (this being the principle of the Alexandrine); inconsistency, in that Pope himself uses the same contrivance to convey the contrary idea of slowness. But why in English? It is not and cannot be disputed that, in the hexameter verse of the Greeks and Latins—which is the model in this matter—what is dis-

tinguished as the "dactylic line" was uniformly applied to express velocity. How was it to do so? Simply from the fact of being pronounced in an equal time with, while containing a greater number of syllables or "bars" than, the ordinary or average measure; as, on the other hand, the spondaic line, composed of the minimum number, was, upon the same principle, used to indicate slowness. So, too, of the Alexandrine in English versification. No, says Campbell, there is a difference: the Alexandrine is not in fact, like the dactylic line, pronounced in the common time. But does this alter the principle? What is the rationale of Metre, whether the classical hexameter or the English heroic?

I have written an essay on the "Rationale of Verse," in which the whole topic is surveyed *ab initio*, and with reference to general and immutable principles. To this essay I refer Mr. Bristed. In the mean time, without troubling myself to ascertain whether Doctors Johnson and Campbell are wrong, or whether Pope is wrong, or whether the reviewer is right or *wrong*, at this point or at that, let me succinctly state what is *the truth* on the topics at issue. And *first;* the same principles, in *all* cases, govern *all* verse. What is true in English is true in Greek. *Secondly;* in a series of lines, if one line contains more syllables than the law of the verse demands, and if, nevertheless, this line is pronounced in the same time, upon the whole, as the rest of the lines, then this line suggests celerity—on account of the increased rapidity of enunciation required. Thus in the Greek hexameter the dactylic

lines—those most abounding in dactyls—serve best to convey the idea of rapid motion. The spondaic lines convey that of slowness. *Thirdly;* it is a gross mistake to suppose that the Greek dactylic line is "the model in this matter"—the matter of the English Alexandrine. The Greek dactylic line is of the same number of feet—bars—beats—pulsations—as the ordinary dactylic-spondaic lines among which it occurs. But the Alexandrine is longer by one foot—by one pulsation—than the pentameters among which it arises. For its pronunciation it demands *more time*, and therefore, *ceteris paribus*, it would well serve to convey the impression of length, or duration, and thus, indirectly, of slowness. I say *ceteris paribus*. But, by varying conditions, we can effect a total change in the impression conveyed. When the idea of slowness is conveyed by the Alexandrine, it is not conveyed by any slower enunciation of syllables—that is to say, it is not *directly* conveyed—but indirectly, through the idea of *length* in the whole line. Now, if we wish to convey, by means of an Alexandrine, the impression of velocity, we readily do so by giving rapidity to our enunciation of the syllables composing the several feet. To effect this, however, we must have *more* syllables, or we shall get through the whole line too quickly for the intended time. To get more syllables, all we have to do is to use, in place of iambuses, what our prosodies call anapæsts.* Thus in the line,

* I use the prosodial word "anapæst" merely because here I have no space to show what the reviewer will admit I have distinctly shown in the essay referred to—viz.: that the additional syllable introduced does *not*

Flies o'er the unbending corn and skims along the main,

the syllables "*the unbend*" form an anapæst and, demanding unusual rapidity of enunciation, in order that we may get them in the ordinary time of an iambus, serve to suggest celerity. By the elision of *e* in *the*, as is customary, the whole of the intended effect is lost; for *th'unbend* is nothing more than the usual iambus. In a word, whenever an Alexandrine expresses celerity, we shall find it to contain one or more anapæsts—the more anapæsts, the more decided the impression. But the tendency of the Alexandrine, consisting merely of the usual iambuses, is to convey slowness—although it conveys this idea feebly, on account of conveying it indirectly. It follows, from what I have said, that the common pentameter, interspersed with anapæsts, would better convey celerity than the Alexandrine interspersed with them in a similar degree;—and it unquestionably does.

XL.

This "species of nothingness" is quite as reasonable, at all events, as any "kind of something-ness." See Cowley's "Creation," where,

An unshaped kind of something first appeared.

XLI.

If any ambitious man have a fancy to revolutionize, at

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make the foot an anapæst, or the equivalent of an anapæst, and that, if it did, it would spoil the line. On this topic, and on all topics connected with verse, there is not a prosody in existence which is not a mere jumble of the grossest error.

one effort, the universal world of human thought, human opinion, and human sentiment, the opportunity is his own—the road to immortal renown lies straight, open, and unincumbered before him. All that he has to do is to write and publish a very little book. Its title should be simple—a few plain words: "My Heart Laid Bare." But—this little book must be *true to its title.*

Now, is it not very singular that, with the rabid thirst for notoriety which distinguishes so many of mankind—so many, too, who care not a fig what is thought of them after death, there should not be found one man having sufficient hardihood to write this little book? To *write,* I say. There are ten thousand men who, if the book were once written, would laugh at the notion of being disturbed by its publication during their life, and who could not even conceive *why* they should object to its being published after their death. But to write it—*there* is the rub. No man dare write it. No man ever will dare write it. No man *could* write it, even if he dared. The paper would shrivel and blaze at every touch of the fiery pen.

XLII.

All that the man of genius demands for his exaltation is moral matter in motion. It makes no difference *whither* tends the motion—whether for him or against him—and it is absolutely of *no* consequence "*what* is the matter."

XLIII.

To converse well, we need the cool tact of talent—to

talk well, the glowing *abandon* of genius. Men of *very* high genius, however, talk at one time *very* well, at another *very* ill:—well, when they have full time, full scope, and a sympathetic listener; ill, when they fear interruption and are annoyed by the impossibility of exhausting the topic during that particular talk. The partial genius is flashy—scrappy. The true genius shudders at incompleteness—imperfection—and usually prefers silence to saying the something which is not every thing that should be said. He is so filled with his theme that he is dumb, first from not knowing how to begin, where there seems eternally beginning behind beginning, and secondly from perceiving his true end at so infinite a distance. Sometimes, dashing into a subject, he blunders, hesitates, stops short, sticks fast, and because he has been overwhelmed by the rush and multiplicity of his thoughts, his hearers sneer at his inability to think. Such a man finds his proper element in those "great occasions" which confound and prostrate the general intellect.

Nevertheless, by his conversation, the influence of the conversationist upon mankind in general is more decided than that of the talker by his talk; the latter invariably talks to best purpose with his pen. And good conversationists are more rare than respectable talkers. I know many of the latter; and of the former only five or six:—among whom I can call to mind, just now, Mr. Willis, Mr. J. T. S. Sullivan, of Philadelphia, Mr. W. M. R., of Petersburg, Va., and Mrs. S——d, formerly of New York.

Most people, in conversing, force us to curse our stars that our lot was not cast among the African nation mentioned by Eudoxus—the savages who, having no mouths, never opened them, as a matter of course. And yet, if denied mouth, some persons whom I have in my eye would contrive to chatter on still—as they do now—through the nose.

XLIV.

I cannot tell how it happens, but, unless, now and then, in a case of portrait-painting, very few of our artists can justly be held guilty of the crime imputed by Apelles to Protogenes—that of "being too natural."

XLV.

It was a pile of the oyster, which yielded the precious pearls of the South, and the artist had judiciously painted some with their lips parted, and showing within the large precious fruit in the attainment of which Spanish cupidity had already proved itself capable of every peril, as well as every crime. At once true and poetical, no comment could have been more severe, etc.—*Mr. Simms'* "*Damsel of Darien.*"

Body of Bacchus!—only think of poetical beauty in the countenance of a gaping oyster!

And how natural, in an age so fanciful, to believe that the stars and starry groups beheld in the new world for the first time by the native of the old were especially assigned for its government and protection.

Now, if by the old world be meant the east, and by the

new world the west, I am at a loss to know what *are* the stars seen in the one which cannot be equally seen in the other. Mr. Simms has abundant faults—or had,—among which inaccurate English, a proneness to revolting images, and pet phrases, are the most noticeable. Nevertheless, leaving out of the question Brockden Brown and Hawthorne (who are each a *genus*), he is immeasurably the best writer of fiction in America. He has more vigor, more imagination, more movement, and more general capacity than all our novelists (save Cooper) combined.

XLVI.

All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun at noon
Just up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.—COLERIDGE.

Is it possible that the poet did not know the apparent diameter of the moon to be greater than that of the sun?

XLVII.

Here is an edition,* which, so far as microscopical excellence and absolute accuracy of typography are concerned, might well be prefaced with the phrase of the Koran—"There is *no* error in this book." We cannot call a single inverted *o* an error—*can* we? But I am really as glad of having found that inverted *o*, as ever was a Columbus or an Archimedes. What, after all, are continents discovered, or silversmiths exposed? Give us a

* Camöens—Genoa, 1798.

good *o* turned upside-down, and a whole herd of bibliomanic Arguses overlooking it for years.

XLVIII.

That sweet smile and serene—that smile never seen but upon the face of the dying and the dead.—*Earnest Maltravers.*

Bulwer is not the man to look a stern fact in the face. He would rather sentimentalize upon a vulgar although picturesque error. Who ever *really* saw any thing but horror in the smile of the dead? We so earnestly *desire* to fancy it "sweet"—that is the source of the mistake; if, indeed, there ever was a mistake in the question.

XLIX.

The misapplication of quotations is clever, and has a capital effect, when well done; but Lord Brougham has not exactly that kind of capacity which the thing requires. One of the best hits in this way is made by Tieck, and I have lately seen it appropriated, with interesting complacency, in an English magazine. The author of the "Journey into the Blue Distance," is giving an account of some young ladies, not very beautiful, whom he caught *in mediis rebus*, at their toilet. "They were curling their monstrous heads," says he, "*as Shakspeare says of the waves in a storm.*"

L.

Here are both Dickens and Bulwer perpetually using the adverb "directly" in the sense of "as soon as." "Directly he came I did so and so."—"Directly I knew

it I said this and that." But observe!—"Grammar is hardly taught," [in the United States,] "being thought an unnecessary basis for other learning." I quote "*America and her Resources*," by the British Counsellor at Law, John Bristed.

LI.

At Ermenonville, too, there is a striking instance of the Gallic rhythm with which a Frenchman regards the English verse. There Gerardin has the following inscription to the memory of Shenstone:

This plain stone
To William Shenstone.
In his writings he displayed
A mind natural;
At Leasowes he laid
Arcadian greens rural.

There are few Parisians, speaking English, who would find any thing *particularly* the matter with this epitaph.

LII.

Upon her was lavished the enthusiastic applause of the most correct taste, and of the deepest sensibility. Human triumph, in all that is most exciting and delicious, never went beyond that which she experienced—or never but in the case of Taglioni. For what are the extorted adulations that fall to the lot of the conqueror?—what even are the extensive honors of the popular author—his far-reaching fame—his high influence—or the most devout public appreciation of his works—to that rapturous approbation of the personal woman—that spontaneous, instant,

present, and palpable applause—those irrepressible acclamations—those eloquent sighs and tears which the idolized Malibran at once heard, and saw, and deeply felt that she deserved? Her brief career was one gorgeous dream—for even the many sad intervals of her grief were but dust in the balance of her glory. In this book* I read much about the causes which curtailed her existence; and there seems to hang around them, as here given, an indistinctness which the fair memorialist tries in vain to illumine. She seems never to approach the full truth. She seems never to reflect that the speedy decease was but a condition of the rapturous life. No thinking person, hearing Malibran sing, could have doubted that she would die in the spring of her days. She crowded ages into hours. She left the world at twenty-five, having existed her thousands of years.

LIII.

Accursed be the heart that does not wildly throb, and palsied be the eye that will not weep, over the woes of the wanderer of Switzerland.—*Monthly Register*, 1807.

This is "dealing damnation round the land" to some purpose,—upon the reader, and not upon the author, as usual. For my part I shall be one of the damned; for I have in vain endeavored to see even a shadow of merit in any thing ever written by either of the Montgomeries.

* "Memoirs and Letters of Madame Malibran," by the Countess of Merlin.

LIV.

Strange—that I should here * find the only non-execrable *barbarian* attempts at imitation of the Greek and Roman measures!

LV.

In my reply to the letter signed "Outis," and defending Mr. Longfellow from certain charges supposed to have been made against him by myself, I took occasion to assert that "of the class of wilful plagiarists nine out of ten are authors of established reputation who plunder recondite, neglected, or forgotten books." I came to this conclusion *a priori;* but experience has confirmed me in it. Here is a plagiarism from Channing; and as it is perpetrated by an anonymous writer in a monthly magazine, the theft seems at war with my assertion—until it is seen that the magazine in question is Campbell's *New Monthly* for August, 1828. Channing, at that time, was comparatively unknown; and, besides, the plagiarism appeared in a foreign country, where there was little probability of detection. Channing, in his essay on Bonaparte, says:

> We would observe that military talent, even of the highest order, is far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius, for it is not conversant with the highest and richest objects of thought. * * * Still the chief work of a general is to apply physical force—to remove physical obstructions—to avail himself of

* Forelaesninger over det Danske Sprog, eller resonneret Dansk Grammatik, ved Jacob Buden.

physical aids and advantages—to act on matter—to overcome rivers, ramparts, mountains, and human muscles; and these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest order :—and accordingly nothing is more common than to find men, eminent in this department, who are almost wholly wanting in the noblest energies of the soul—in imagination and taste—in the capacity of enjoying works of genius—in large views of human nature—in the moral sciences—in the application of analysis and generalization to the human mind and to society, and in original conceptions on the great subjects which have absorbed the most glorious understandings.

The thief in *The New Monthly*, says:

Military talent, even of the highest *grade*, is *very* far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius, for it is *never made* conversant with the *more delicate and abstruse of mental operations*. It is used to apply physical force; to remove physical force; to remove physical obstructions; to avail itself of physical aids and advantages; and all these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest *and rarest* order. Nothing is more common than to find men eminent in the science and practice of war, *wholly* wanting in the nobler energies of the soul; in imagination, in taste, in *enlarged* views of human nature, in the moral sciences, in the application of analysis and generalization to the human mind and to society; or in original conceptions on the great subjects which have *occupied and* absorbed the most glorious of human understandings.

The article in *The New Monthly* is on "The State of Parties." The italics are mine.

Apparent plagiarisms frequently arise from an author's self-repetition. He finds that something he has already published has fallen dead—been overlooked—or that it is peculiarly *àpropos* to another subject now under discussion. He therefore introduces the passage; often without allusion to his having printed it before; and sometimes he introduces it into an anonymous article. An anonymous writer is thus, now and then, unjustly accused of plagiarism, when the sin is merely that of self-repetition. In the present case, however, there has been, a deliberate plagiarism of the silliest as well as meanest species. Trusting to the obscurity of his original, the plagiarist has fallen upon the idea of killing two birds with one stone—of dispensing with all disguise but that of *decoration*. Channing says "order"—the writer in *The New Monthly* says "grade." The former says that this order is "far from holding," etc.—the latter says it is "*very* far from holding." The one says that military talent is "*not* conversant," and so on—the other says "it is *never made* conversant." The one speaks of "the highest and richest objects"—the other of "the more delicate and abstruse." Channing speaks of "thought"—the thief of "mental operations." Channing mentions "intelligence of the *highest* order"—the thief will have it of "the highest *and rarest*." Channing observes that military talent is often "*almost* wholly wanting," etc.—the

thief maintains it to be "*wholly* wanting." Channing alludes to "*large* views of human nature"—the thief can be content with nothing less than "enlarged" ones. Finally, the American having been satisfied with a reference to "subjects which have absorbed the most glorious understandings," the Cockney puts him to shame at once by discoursing about "subjects which have *occupied and* absorbed the most glorious *of human* understandings"—as if one could be absorbed, without being occupied, by a subject—as if "*of*" were here any thing more than two superfluous letters—and as if there were any chance of the reader's supposing that the understandings in question were the understandings of frogs, or jackasses, or Johnny Bulls.

By the way, in a case of this kind, whenever there is a question as to who is the original and who the plagiarist, the point may be determined, almost invariably, by observing which passage is amplified, or exaggerated, in tone. To disguise his stolen horse, the uneducated thief cuts off the tail; but the educated thief prefers tying on a new tail at the end of the old one, and painting them both sky blue.

LVI.

When I consider the true talent—the real force of Mr. Emerson, I am lost in amazement at finding him little more than a respectful imitation of Carlyle. Is it possible that Mr. E. has ever seen a copy of Seneca? Scarcely—or he would long ago have abandoned his model in utter

confusion at the parallel between his own worship of the author of "Sartor Resartus" and the aping of Sallust by Aruntius, as described in the 114th Epistle. In the writer of the "History of the Punic Wars" Emerson is portrayed to the life. The parallel is close; for not only is the imitation of the same character, but the things imitated are identical. Undoubtedly it is to be said of Sallust, far more plausibly than of Carlyle, that his obscurity, his unusuality of expression, and his Laconism (which had the effect of diffuseness, since the time gained in the mere perusal of his pithinesses is trebly lost in the necessity of cogitating them out)—it may be said of Sallust, more truly than of Carlyle, that these qualities bore the impress of his genius, and were but a portion of his unaffected thought. If there is any difference between Aruntius and Emerson, this difference is clearly in favor of the former, who was in some measure excusable, on the ground that he was as great a fool as the latter *is not*.

LVII.

I believe that odors have an altogether peculiar force, in affecting us through association; a force differing *essentially* from that of objects addressing the touch, the taste, the sight, or the hearing.

LVIII.

It would have been becoming, I think, in Bulwer, to have made at least a running acknowledgment of that extensive indebtedness to Arnay's "Private Life of the

Romans,"* which he had so little scruple about incurring, during the composition of "The Last Days of Pompeii." He acknowledges, I believe, what he owes to Sir William Gell's "Pompeiana." Why this?—why not that?

LIX.

One of our truest poets is Thomas Buchanan Reid. His most distinctive features are, first, "tenderness," or subdued passion, and secondly, fancy. His sin is imitativeness. *At present*, although evincing high capacity, he is but a copyist of Longfellow—that is to say, but the echo of an echo. Here is a beautiful thought which is *not* the property of Mr. Reid:

> And, where the spring-time sun had longer shone,
> *A violet looked up and found itself alone.*

Here again: a spirit

> Slowly through the lake descended,
> Till from her hidden form below
> The waters took a golden glow,
> *As if the star which made her forehead bright*
> *Had burst and filled the lake with light.*

Lowell has some lines very similar, ending with

> As if a star had burst within his brain.

LX.

I cannot say that I ever fairly comprehended the force of the term "*insult*," until I was given to understand, one day, by a member of the "*North American Review*" clique, that this journal was "not only willing but anxious

* 1764.

to render me that justice which had been already rendered me by the '*Revue Française*' and the '*Revue des Deux Mondes*'"—but was "restrained from so doing" by my "invincible spirit of antagonism." I wish the *North American Review* to express *no* opinion of me whatever—for I have none of it. In the mean time, as I see no motto on its title-page, let me recommend it one from Sterne's "Letter from France." Here it is:—"As we rode along the valley we saw a herd of asses on the top of one of the mountains—how they viewed and *reviewed* us!"

LXI.

Von Raumer says that Enslen, a German optician, conceived the idea of throwing a shadowy figure, by optical means, into the chair of Banquo; and that the thing was readily done. Intense effect was produced; and I do not doubt that an American audience might be electrified by the feat. But our managers not only have no invention of their own, but no energy to avail themselves of that of others.

LXII.

A capital book, generally speaking;* but Mr. Grattan has a bad habit—that of loitering in the road—of dallying and toying with his subjects, as a kitten with a mouse—instead of grasping it firmly at once and eating it up without more ado. He takes up too much time in the ante-room. He has never done with his introductions.

* "Highways and Byways."

Occasionally one introduction is but the vestibule to another; so that by the time he arrives at his main incidents there is nothing more to tell. He seems afflicted with that curious but common perversity observed in garrulous old women—the desire of tantalizing by circumlocution. Mr. G.'s circumlocution, however, is by no means like that which Albany Fonblanque describes as a "style of about and about and all the way round to nothing and nonsense." * * * If the greasy-looking lithograph here given as a frontispiece, be meant for Mr. Grattan, then is Mr. Grattan like nobody else—for the fact is, I never yet knew an individual with a wire wig, or the countenance of an underdone apple dumpling. * * * As a general rule, no man should put his own face in his own book. In looking at the author's countenance the reader is seldom in condition to keep his own.

LXIII.

Here is a good idea for a magazine paper—let somebody "work it up"—A flippant pretender to universal acquirement—a would-be Crichton—engrosses, for an hour or two, perhaps, the attention of a large company—most of whom are profoundly impressed by his knowledge. He is very witty, in especial, at the expense of a modest young gentleman, who ventures to make no reply, and who, finally, leaves the room as if overwhelmed with confusion—the Crichton greeting his exit with a laugh. Presently he returns, followed by a footman carrying an

armful of books. These are deposited on the table. The young gentleman, now, referring to some pencilled notes which he had been secretly taking during the Crichton's display of erudition, pins the latter to his statements, each by each, and refutes them all in turn, by reference to the very authorities cited by the egotist himself—whose ignorance at all points is thus made apparent.

LXIV.

A long time ago—twenty-three or four years ago at least—Edward C. Pinckney, of Baltimore, published an exquisite poem entitled "A Health." It was profoundly admired by the critical few, but had little circulation—this for no better reason than that the author was born *too far South.* I quote a few lines:

Affections are as *thoughts* to her,
The measures of her hours—
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young *flowers.*
To her the better elements
And kindlier stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'T is less of earth than Heaven.

Now, in 1842, Mr. George Hill published "The Ruins of Athens and Other Poems,"—and from one of the "Other Poems" I quote what follows:

And thoughts go sporting through her mind
Like children among *flowers;*
And deeds of gentle goodness are
The measures of her hours.
In soul or face she bears no trace
Of one from Eden driven,

But like the rainbow seems, though born
Of Earth, a part of Heaven.

Is this plagiarism or is it *not ?*—I merely ask for information.

LXV.

Had the "George Balcombe" of Professor Beverley Tucker been the work of any one born north of Mason and Dixon's line, it would have been long ago recognized as one of the very noblest fictions ever written by an American. It is almost as good as "Caleb Williams." The manner in which the cabal of the *North American Review* first write all our books and then review them, puts me in mind of the fable about the Lion and the Painter. It is high time that the literary South took its own interests into its own charge.

LXVI.

Here is a plot which, with all its complexity, has no adaptation—no dependency ;—it is involute and nothing more—having all the air of G——'s wig, or the cycles and epicycles in Ptolemy's "Almagest."

LXVII.

We might give two plausible derivations of the epithet "weeping" as applied to the willow. We might say that the word has its origin in the pendulous character of the long branches, which suggest the idea of water dripping ; or we might assert that the term comes from a fact in the natural history of the tree. It has a vast insensible per-

spiration, which, upon sudden cold, condenses, and sometimes is precipitated in a shower. Now, one might very accurately determine the bias and value of a man's powers of causality, by observing which of these two derivations he would adopt. The former is, beyond question, the true; and, for this reason—that common or vulgar epithets are universally suggested by common or immediately obvious things, without strict regard to any exactitude in application:—but the latter would be greedily seized by nine philologists out of ten, for no better cause than its *epigrammatism*—than the pointedness with which the singular fact seems to touch the occasion. Here, then, is a subtle source of error which Lord Bacon has neglected. It is an idol *of the Wit.*

LXVIII.

In a "Hymn for Christmas," by Mrs. Hemans, we find the following stanza:

> Oh, lovely voices of the sky
> Which hymned the Saviour's birth,
> Are ye not singing still on high,
> Ye that sang "Peace on Earth"?
> To us yet speak the strains
> Wherewith, in times gone by,
> Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
> Oh, voices of the sky!

And at page 305 of "The Christian Keepsake and Missionary Annual for 1840"—a Philadelphia Annual—we find "A Christmas Carol," by Richard W. Dodson—the first stanza running thus:

Angel voices of the sky!
  Ye that hymned Messiah's birth,
Sweetly singing from on high
  "Peace, Good-will to all on earth!"
Oh, to us impart those strains!
  Bid our doubts and fears to cease!
Ye that cheered the Syrian swains,
  Cheer us with that song of peace!

LXIX.

The more there are great excellences in a work the less am I surprised at finding great demerits. When a book is said to have many faults, nothing is decided, and I cannot tell, by this, whether it is excellent or execrable. It is said of another that it is without fault; if the account be just, the work *cannot* be excellent.—*Trublet.*

The "*cannot*" here is much too positive. The opinions of Trublet are wonderfully prevalent, but they are none the less demonstrably false. It is merely the *indolence* of genius which has given them currency. The truth seems to be that genius of the highest order lives in a state of perpetual vacillation between ambition and *the scorn of it*. The ambition of a great intellect is at best negative. It struggles—it labors—it creates—not because excellence is desirable, but because to be excelled where there exists a sense of the power to excel, is unendurable. Indeed I cannot help thinking that the *greatest* intellects (since these most clearly perceive the laughable absurdity of human ambition) remain contentedly "mute and inglorious." At all events, the *vacillation* of which I speak is the prominent feature of genius. Alternately inspired

and depressed, its inequalities of mood are stamped upon its labors. This is the truth, generally—but it is a truth very different from the assertion involved in the "cannot" of Trublet. Give to genius a sufficiently enduring *motive*, and the result will be harmony, proportion, beauty, perfection—all, in this case, synonymous terms. Its supposed "inevitable" irregularities shall not be found:—for it is clear that the susceptibility to impressions of beauty —that susceptibility which is the most important element of genius—implies an equally exquisite sensitiveness and aversion to deformity. The motive—the *enduring* motive—has indeed, hitherto, fallen *rarely* to the lot of genius; but I could point to several compositions which, "without any fault," are yet "excellent"—supremely so. The world, too, is on the threshold of an epoch, wherein, with the aid of a calm philosophy, such compositions shall be ordinarily the work of that genius which is *true*. One of the first and most essential steps, in overpassing this threshold, will serve to kick out of the world's way this very idea of Trublet—this untenable and paradoxical idea of the incompatibility of genius with *art*.

LXX.

It may well be doubted whether a single paragraph of merit can be found either in the "Koran" of Lawrence Sterne, or in the "Lacon" of Colton, of which paragraph the origin, or at least the germ, may not be traced to Seneca, to Plutarch (through Machiavelli), to Machiavelli

himself, to Bacon, to Burdon, to Burton, to Bolingbroke, to Rochefoucault, to Balzac, the author of "*La Manière de Bien Penser*," or to Bielfeld, the German, who wrote, in French, "*Les Premiers Traits de l'Erudition universelle.*"

LXXI.

A man of genius, if not permitted to choose his own subject, will do worse, in letters, than if he had talents none at all. And *here* how imperatively is he controlled! To be sure, he can write to suit himself—but in the same manner his publishers print. From the nature of our copyright laws, he has no individual powers. As for his free agency, it is about equal to that of the dean and chapter of the see-cathedral, in a British election of Bishops—an election held by virtue of the king's writ of *congé d'élire*—specifying the person to be elected.

LXXII.

To see distinctly the machinery—the wheels and pinions—of any work of Art is, unquestionably, of itself, a pleasure, but one which we are able to enjoy only just in proportion as we do *not* enjoy the legitimate effect designed by the artist;—and, in fact, it too often happens that to reflect analytically upon Art, is to reflect after the fashion of the mirrors in the temple of Smyrna, which represent the fairest images as deformed.

LXXIII.

With the aid of a lantern, I have been looking again at "Niagara and other Poems" (Lord only knows if that be

the true title!)—but "there 's nothing in it":—at least nothing of Mr. Lord's own—nothing which is not stolen—or (more delicately) transfused—transmitted. By the way, Newton says a great deal about "fits of easy transmission and reflection,"* and I have no doubt that "Niagara" was put together in one of these identical fits.

LXXIV.

A remarkable work,† and one which I find much difficulty in admitting to be the composition of a woman. Not that many good and glorious things have not been the composition of women—but, because, here, the severe precision of style, the *thoroughness*, and the luminousness, are points never observable, in even the most admirable of their writings. Who is Lady Georgiana Fullerton? Who is that Countess of Dacre, who edited "Ellen Wareham,"—the most passionate of fictions—approached, only in some particulars of passion, by this? The great defect of "Ellen Middleton" lies in the disgusting sternness, captiousness, and bullet-headedness of her husband. We cannot sympathize with her love for him. And the intense selfishness of the rejected lover precludes that compassion which is designed. Alice is a *creation* of true genius. The imagination, throughout, is of a lofty order, and the snatches of original verse would do honor to any poet living. But the chief merit, after all, is that of the *style*—about which it is difficult to say too much in the

* Of the solar rays—in the "Optics."

† "Ellen Middleton."

way of praise, although it has, now and then, an odd Gallicism—such as "she lost her head," meaning she grew crazy. There is much, in the whole manner of this book, which puts me in mind of "Caleb Williams."

LXXV.

The God-abstractions of the modern polytheism are nearly in as sad a state of perplexity and promiscuity as were the more substantial deities of the Greeks. Not a quality named that does not impinge upon some one other; and Porphyry admits that Vesta, Rhea, Ceres. Themis, Proserpina, Bacchus, Attis, Adonis, Silenus, Priapus, and the Satyrs, were merely different terms for the same thing. Even gender was never precisely settled. Servius on Virgil mentions a Venus with a beard. In Macrobius, too, Calvus talks of her as if she were a man; while Valerius Soranus expressly calls Jupiter "the Mother of the Gods."

LXXVI.

The next work of Carlyle will be entitled "Bow-Wow," and the title-page will have a motto from the opening chapter of the Koran: "There is *no* error in this book."

LXXVII.

Surely M—— cannot complain of the manner in which his book has been received; for the public, in regard to it, has given him just such an assurance as Polyhemus pacified Ulysses with, while his companions were being eaten up before his eyes. "Your book, Mr. M——," says

the public, "shall be—I pledge you my word—the very last that I devour."

LXXVIII.

The modern reformist, Philosophy, which annihilates the individual by way of aiding the mass; and the late reformist, Legislation, which prohibits pleasure with the view of advancing happiness, seem to be chips of that old block of a French feudal law which, to prevent young partridges from being disturbed, imposed penalties upon hoeing and weeding.

LXXIX.

That Demosthenes "turned out very badly," appears, beyond dispute, from a passage in "*Meker de vet. et. rect. Prom. Ling. Græcæ*," where we read "*Nec illi* (*Demostheni*) *turpe vide-batur, optimis relictis magistris, ad canes se conferre, etc., etc.*"—that is to say, Demosthenes was not ashamed to quit good society and "*go to the dogs.*"

LXXX.

When ——— and ——— *pavoneggiarsi* about the celebrated personages whom they have "seen" in their travels, we shall not be far wrong in inferring that these celebrated personages were seen ἐχθς—as Pindar says he "saw" Archilochus, who died ages before the former was born.

LXXXI.

I cannot help thinking that romance-writers, in general, might, now and then, find their account in taking a hint from the Chinese, who, in spite of building their houses

downward, have still sense enough *to begin their books at the end.*

LXXXII.

La Harpe (who was no critic) has, nevertheless, done little more than strict justice to the fine taste and precise finish of Racine, in all that regards the minor morals of Literature. In these he as far excels Pope, as Pope the veriest dolt in his own "Dunciad."

LXXXIII.

I have sometimes amused myself by endeavoring to fancy what would be the fate of an individual gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect *very* far superior to that of his race. Of course, he would be conscious of his superiority; nor could he (if otherwise constituted as man is) help manifesting his consciousness. Thus he would make himself enemies at all points. And since his opinions and speculations would widely differ from those of *all* mankind—that he would be considered a madman, is evident. How horribly painful such a condition! Hell could invent no greater torture than that of being charged with abnormal weakness on account of being abnormally strong.

In like manner, nothing can be clearer than that a *very* generous spirit—*truly* feeling what all merely profess—must inevitably find itself misconceived in every direction—its motives misinterpreted. Just as extremes of intelligence would be thought fatuity, so excess of chivalry could not fail of being looked upon as meanness in its

last degree:—and so on with other virtues. This subject is a painful one indeed. That individuals *have* so soared above the plane of their race, is scarcely to be questioned; but, in looking back through history for traces of their existence, we should pass over all biographies of "the good and the great," while we search carefully the slight records of wretches who died in prison, in Bedlam, or upon the gallows.

LXXXIV.

Samuel Butler, of Hudibrastic memory, must have had a prophetic eye to the American Congress when he defined a *rabble* as—"A congregation or assembly of the States-General—every one being of a several judgment concerning whatever business be under consideration" * * * "They meet only to quarrel," he adds, "and then return home full of satisfaction *and narrative*."

LXXXV.

I have now before me a book in which the most noticeable thing is the pertinacity with which "Monarch" and "King" are printed with a capital M and a capital K. The author, it seems, has been lately presented at Court. He will employ a small *g* in future, I presume, whenever he is so unlucky as to have to speak of his God.

LXXXVI.

Were I called on to define, *very* briefly, the term "Art," I should call it the "reproduction of what the Senses perceive in Nature through the veil of the soul." The mere

imitation, however accurate, of what *is* in Nature, entitles no man to the sacred name of "Artist." Denner was no artist. The grapes of Zeuxis were *in*artistic—unless in a bird's-eye view; and not even the curtain of Parrhasius could conceal his deficiency in point of genius. I have mentioned the "*veil* of the soul." Something of the kind appears indispensable in Art. We can, at any time, double the true beauty of an actual landscape by half closing our eyes as we look at it. The naked Senses sometimes see too little—but then *always* they see too much.

LXXXVII.

With how unaccountable an obstinacy even our best writers persist in talking about "moral courage"—as if there could be any courage that was *not* moral. The adjective is improperly applied to the subject instead of the object. The energy which overcomes fear—whether fear of evil threatening the person or threatening the impersonal circumstances amid which we exist—is, of course, simply a mental energy—is, of course, simply "moral." But, in speaking of "*moral* courage" we *imply* the existence of physical. Quite as reasonable an expression would be that of "bodily thought," or of "muscular imagination."

LXXXVIII.

I have great faith in fools:—self-confidence my friends will call it:—

> Si demain, oubliant d'éclore,
> Le jour manquait, eh bien! demain

Quelque fou trouverait encore
Un flambeau pour le genre humain.

By the way, what with the new electric light and other matters De Béranger's idea is not so *very* extravagant.

LXXXIX.

"He that is born to be a man," says Wieland, in his "Peregrinus Proteus," "neither should nor can be any thing nobler, greater, or better than a man." The fact is, that in efforts to soar above our nature, we invariably fall below it. Your reformist demigods are merely devils turned inside out.

XC.

The phrase of which our poets, and more especially our orators, are so fond—the phrase "music of the spheres"—has arisen simply from a misconception of the Platonic word *μουσικη*—which, with the Athenians, included not merely the harmonies of tune and time, but *proportion* generally. In recommending the study of "music" as "the best education for the soul," Plato referred to the cultivation of the Taste, in contradistinction from that of the Pure Reason. By the "music of the spheres" is meant the agreements—the adaptations—in a word, the proportions—developed in the astronomical laws. He had *no* allusion to music in *our* understanding of the term. The word "mosaic," which we derive from *μουσικη*, refers, in like manner, to the proportion, or harmony of *color*, observed—or which should be observed—in the department of Art so entitled.

XCI.

Not long ago, to call a man "a great wizard," was to invoke for him fire and fagot; but now, when we wish to run our *protégé* for President, we just dub him: "a *little* magician." The fact is, that, on account of the curious modern *bouleversement* of old opinion, one cannot be too cautious of *the grounds* on which he lauds a friend or vituperates a foe.

XCII.

"Philosophy," says Hegel, "is utterly useless and fruitless, and *for this very reason*, is the sublimest of all pursuits, the most deserving attention, and the most worthy of our zeal." This jargon was suggested, no doubt, by Tertullian's "*Mortuus est Dei filius, credibile est quia ineptum—et sepultus resurrexit; certum est quia impossibile.*"

XCIII.

A clever French writer of "Memoirs" is quite right in saying that "if the *Universities* had been willing to permit it, the disgusting old *debauché* of Teos, with his eternal Batyllis, would long ago have been buried in the darkness of oblivion."

XCIV.

It is by no means an irrational fancy that, in a future existence, we shall look upon what we think our present existence, as a dream.

XCV.

"The artist belongs to his work, not the work to the artist."—*Novalis.**

* The nom de plume of Von Hardenburgh.

In nine cases out of ten it is pure waste of time to attempt extorting sense from a German apothegm;—or rather, any sense and every sense may be extorted from all of them. If, in the sentence above quoted, the intention is to assert that the artist is the slave of his theme, and must conform it to his thoughts, I have no faith in the idea, which appears to me that of an essentially prosaic intellect. In the hands of the *true* artist the theme, or "work," is but a mass of clay, of which any thing (within the compass of the mass and quality of the clay) may be fashioned at will, or according to the skill of the workman. The clay is, in fact, the slave of the artist. It belongs to him. His genius, to be sure, is manifested, very distinctively, in *the choice* of the clay. It should be neither fine nor coarse, abstractly—but just so fine or so coarse—just so plastic or so rigid—as may best serve the purposes of the thing to be wrought—of the idea to be made out, or, more exactly, of the impression to be conveyed. There *are* artists, however, who fancy only the *finest* material, and who, consequently, produce only the *finest* ware. It is generally very transparent and excessively brittle.

XCVI.

Tell a scoundrel, three or four times a day, that he is the pink of probity, and you make him at least the perfection of "respectability" in good earnest. On the other hand, accuse an honorable man, too pertinaciously, of being a villain, and you fill him with a perverse ambition to show you that you are not altogether in the wrong.

XCVII.

The Romans worshipped the standards ; and the Roman standard happened to be an eagle. Our standard is only one-tenth of an Eagle—a Dollar—but we make all even by adoring it with tenfold devotion.

XCVIII.

A pumpkin has more angles than C——, and is altogether a cleverer thing. He is remarkable at one point only—at that of being remarkable for nothing.

XCIX.

That evil predominates over good, becomes evident, when we consider that there can be found no aged person who would be willing to relive the life he has already lived.—*Volney.*

The idea here, is not distinctly made out ; for unless through the context, we cannot be sure whether the author means merely this :—that every aged person fancies he might, in a different course of life, have been happier than in the one actually lived, and, for this reason, would not be willing to live *his* life over again, *but some other life ;*—or, whether the sentiment intended is this :—that if, upon the grave's brink, the choice between the expected death and the re-living the old life, were offered any aged person, that person would prefer to die. The first proposition is, perhaps, true ; but the last (which is the one designed) is not only doubtful, in point of mere fact, but is of no effect, even if granted to be true, in sustaining the original proposition—that evil predominates

over good. It is assumed that the aged person will not re-live his life, because he *knows* that its evil predominated over its good. The source of error lies in the word "knows"—in the assumption that we can ever be, really, in possession of the whole knowledge to which allusion is cloudily made. But there is a *seeming*—a fictitious knowledge; and this very seeming knowledge it is, of what the life has been, which incapacitates the aged person from deciding the question on its merits. He blindly deduces a notion of the happiness of the original real life—a notion of its preponderating evil or good—from a consideration of the secondary or supposititious one. In his estimate he merely strikes a balance between *events*, and leaves quite out of the account that elastic *Hope* which is the Eos of all. Man's real life is happy, chiefly because he is ever expecting that it soon will be so. In regarding the supposititious life, however, we paint to ourselves chill certainties for warm expectations, and grievances quadrupled in being foreseen. But because we cannot avoid doing this—strain our imaginative faculties as we will—because it is so very difficult—so nearly impossible a task, to fancy the known unknown—the done unaccomplished—and because (through our inability to fancy all this) we prefer death to a secondary life—does it, in any manner, follow that the evil of the properly-considered real existence *does* predominate over the good?

In order that a just estimate be made by Mr. Volney's "aged person," and from this estimate a judicious choice,

—in order, again, that from this estimate and choice, we deduce any clear comparison of good with evil in human existence,—it will be necessary that we obtain the opinion, or "choice," upon this point, from an aged person, who shall be in condition to appreciate, with precision, the hopes he is naturally led to leave out of question, but which reason tells us he would as strongly experience as ever, in the absolute re-living of the life. On the other hand, too, he must be in condition to dismiss from the estimate the fears which he actually feels, and which show him bodily the ills that are to happen, but which fears, again, reason assures us he would *not*, in the absolute secondary life, encounter. Now what mortal was ever in condition to make these allowances?—to perform impossibilities in giving these considerations their due weight? What mortal, then, was ever in condition to make a well-grounded choice? Now, from an ill-grounded one, are we to make deductions which shall guide us aright? How out of error shall we fabricate truth?

C.

This reasoning is about as convincing as would be that of a traveller who, going from Maryland to New York without entering Pennsylvania, should advance this feat as an argument against Leibnitz' *Law of Continuity*—according to which nothing passes from one *state* to another without passing through all the intermediate states.

CI.

Macaulay, in his just admiration of Addison, overrates Tickell, and does not seem to be aware how much the author of the "Elegy" is indebted to French models. Boileau, especially, he robbed without mercy, and without measure. A flagrant example is here. Boileau has the lines:

En vain contre "Le Cid" un ministre se ligue.
Tout Paris pour Chiméne à les yeux de Rodrigue.

Tickell thus appropriates them:

While the charm'd reader with thy thought complies,
And views thy Rosamond with Henry's eyes.

CII.

Stolen, body and soul (and spoilt in the stealing), from a paper *of the same title* in the *European Magazine* for December, 1817. Blunderingly done throughout, and must have cost more trouble than an original thing. This makes paragraph 33 of my "Chapter on American Cribbage." The beauty of these *exposés* must lie in the precision and unanswerability with which they are given—in day and date—in chapter and verse—and, above all, in an unveiling of the minute trickeries by which the thieves hope to disguise their stolen wares. I must soon a tale unfold, and an astonishing tale it will be. The C—— bears away the bell. The ladies, however, should positively not be guilty of these tricks; for one has never the heart to unmask or deplume them. After all, there is

this advantage in purloining one's magazine papers: we are never forced to dispose of them under prime cost.

CIII.

Amare et sapere vix Deo conceditur, as acute Seneca well observes.

However acute might be Seneca, still he was not sufficiently acute to say this. The sentence is often attributed to him, but is not to be found in his works. "*Semel insanavimus omnes*," a phrase often quoted, is invariably placed to the account of Horace, and with equal error. It is from the "*De Honesto Amore*" of the Italian Mantuanus, who has

Id commune malum ; semel insanavimus omnes.

In the title, "*De Honesto Amore*," by the way, Mantuanus misconceives the force of *honestus*—just as Dryden does in his translation of Virgil's

Et quocunque Deus circum caput egit honestum ;

which he renders

On whate'er side he turns his *honest* face.

CIV.

No ; he fell by his own fame. Like Richmann, he was blasted by the fires himself had sought, and obtained, from the heavens.

CV.

How overpowering a style is that of Curran! I use "overpowering" in the sense of the English exquisite. I can imagine nothing more distressing than the extent of his eloquence.

CVI.

How radically has "Undine" been misunderstood! Beneath its obvious meaning there runs an under-current, simple, quite intelligible, artistically managed, and richly philosophical.

From internal evidence afforded by the book itself, I gather that the author suffered from the ills of a mal-arranged marriage—the bitter reflections thus engendered, inducing the fable.

In the contrast between the artless, thoughtless, and careless character of Undine before possessing a soul, and her serious, enwrapt, and anxious yet happy condition after possessing it,—a condition which, with all its multiform disquietudes, she still feels to be preferable to her original state,—Fouqué has beautifully painted the difference between the heart unused to *love*, and the heart which has received its inspiration.

The jealousies which follow the marriage, arising from the conduct of Bertalda, are but the natural troubles of love; but the persecutions of Kuhleborn and the other water-spirits who take umbrage at Huldbrand's treatment of his wife, are meant to picture certain difficulties from the interference of relations in conjugal matters—difficulties which the author has himself experienced. The warning of Undine to Huldbrand—"Reproach me not upon the waters, or we part forever"—is intended to embody the truth that quarrels between man and wife are seldom or never irremediable unless when taking place in

the presence of third parties. The second wedding of the knight with his gradual forgetfulness of Undine, and Undine's intense grief beneath the waters—are dwelt upon so pathetically—so passionately—that there can be no doubt of the author's personal opinions on the subject of second marriages—no doubt of his deep personal interest in the question. How thrillingly are these few and simple words made to convey his belief that the mere death of a beloved wife does not imply a separation so final or so complete as to justify an union with another!

> The fisherman had loved Undine with exceeding tenderness, and it was a doubtful conclusion to his mind that the mere disappearance of his beloved child could be properly viewed as her death.

This is where the old man is endeavoring to dissuade the knight from wedding Bertalda.

I cannot say whether the novelty of the conception of "Undine," or the loftiness and purity of its ideality, or the intensity of its pathos, or the rigor of its simplicity, or the high artistic ability with which all are combined into a well-kept, well-*motivirt* whole of absolute unity of effect—is the particular chiefly to be admired.

How delicate and graceful are the transitions from subject to subject!—a point severely testing the autorial power—as, when, for the purpose of the story, it becomes necessary that the knight, with Undine and Bertalda, shall proceed down the Danube. An ordinary novelist would have here tormented both himself and his readers, in the

search for a sufficient motive for the voyage. But, in a fable such as "Undine," how all-sufficient—how well in keeping—appears the simple motive as signed!—

In this grateful union of friendship and affection, winter came and passed away; and spring, with its foliage of tender green, and heaven of softest blue, succeeded to gladden the hearts of the three inmates of the castle. *What wonder, then, that its storks and swallows inspired them also with a disposition to travel?*

CVII.

I have at length attained the last page, which is a thing to thank God for; and all this may be logic, but I am sure it is nothing more. Until I get the means of refutation, however, I must be content to say, with the Jesuits, Le Sueur, and Jaquier, that "I acknowledge myself obedient to the decrees of the Pope against the motion of the earth."

CVIII.

Not so:—The first number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was published on the first of January, 1731; but long before this—in 1681—there appeared the *Monthly Recorder* with all the magazine features. I have a number of the *London Magazine*, dated 1760;—commenced 1732, at least, but I have reason to think much earlier.

CIX.

"Rhododaphne" (who wrote it?) is brim-full of music:—e. g.

By living streams, in sylvan shades,
Where wind and wave symphonious make

Rich melody, the youths and maids
No more with choral music wake
Lone Echo from her tangled brake.

CX.

I have just finished the "Mysteries of Paris,"—a work of unquestionable power—a museum of novel and ingenious incident—a paradox of childish folly and consummate skill. It has this point in common with all the "convulsive" fictions—that the incidents are *consequential* from the premises, while the premises themselves are laughably incredible. Admitting, for instance, the possibility of such a man as Rodolphe, and of such a state of society as would tolerate his perpetual interference, we have no difficulty in agreeing to admit the possibility of his accomplishing all that is accomplished. Another point which distinguishes the Sue school, is the total want of the *ars celare artem*. In effect the writer is always saying to the reader: "Now—in one moment—you shall see what you shall see. I am about to produce on you a remarkable impression. Prepare to have your imagination, or your pity, greatly excited." The wires are not only not concealed, but displayed as things to be admired, equally with the puppets they set in motion. The result is, that in perusing, for example, a pathetic chapter in the "Mysteries of Paris" we say to ourselves, without shedding a tear: "Now, here is something which will be sure to move every reader to tears." The philosophical motives attributed to Sue are absurd in the extreme. His

first and in fact his sole object is to make an exciting, and therefore saleable book. The cant (implied or direct) about the amelioration of society, etc., is but a very usual trick among authors, whereby they hope to add such a tone of dignity or utilitarianism to their pages as shall gild the pill of their licentiousness. The *ruse* is even more generally employed by way of engrafting a meaning upon the otherwise unintelligible. In the latter case, however, this *ruse* is an after-thought, manifested in the shape of a moral, either appended (as in Æsop), or dove-tailed into the body of the work, piece by piece, with great care, but never without leaving evidence of its after-insertion.

The translation (by C. H. Town) is very imperfect, and, by a too literal rendering of idioms, contrives to destroy the whole *tone* of the original. Or, perhaps, I should say a too literal rendering of *local peculiarities of phrase*. There is one point (never yet, I believe, noticed) which obviously, should be considered in translation. We should so render the original that *the version should impress the people for whom it is intended, just as the original impresses the people for whom it* (*the original*) *is intended*. Now, if we rigorously translate mere local idiosyncrasies of phrase (to say nothing of idioms) we inevitably distort the author's designed impression. We are sure to produce a whimsical, at least, if not always a ludicrous, effect—for novelties, in a case of this kind, are incongruities—oddities. A distinction, of course, should

be observed between those peculiarities of phrase which appertain to the nation and those which belong to the author himself—for these latter will have a similar effect upon *all* nations, and should be literally translated. It is merely the general inattention to the principle here proposed, which has given rise to so much international depreciation, if not positive contempt, as regards literature. The English reviews, for example, have abundant allusions to what they call the "frivolousness" of French letters—an idea chiefly derived from the impression made by the French matter merely—this manner, again, having in it nothing *essentially* frivolous, but affecting all foreigners as such (the English especially) through that oddity of which I have already assigned the origin. The French return the compliment, complaining of the British *gaucherie* in style. The phraseology of every nation has a taint of *drollery* about it in the ears of every other nation speaking a different tongue. Now, to convey the true spirit of an author, this taint should be corrected in translation. We should pride ourselves less upon literality and more upon dexterity at paraphrase. Is it not clear that, by such dexterity, *a translation may be made to convey to a foreigner a juster conception of an original than could the original itself?*

The distinction I have made between mere idioms (which *of course*, should never be literally rendered) and "local idiosyncrasies of *phrase*," may be exemplified by a passage at page 291 of Mr. Town's translation:

"Never mind! Go in there! You will take the cloak of Calebasse. You will wrap yourself in it," etc., etc.

These are the words of a lover to his mistress, and are meant kindly, although imperatively. They embody a local peculiarity—a *French* peculiarity of phrase, and (to French ears) convey nothing dictatorial. To our own, nevertheless, they sound like the command of a military officer to his subordinate, and thus produce an effect quite different from that intended. The translation, in such case, should be a bold paraphrase. For example:—"I must insist upon your wrapping yourself in the cloak of Calebasse."

Mr. Town's version of "The Mysteries of Paris," however, is not objectionable on the score of excessive literality alone, but abounds in misapprehensions of the author's meaning. One of the strangest errors occurs at page 368, where we read:

"From a wicked, brutal savage and riotous rascal, he has made me a kind of honest man by saying only two words to me; but these words, 'voyez-vous,' were like magic."

Here "voyez-vous" are made to be the two magical words spoken; but the translation should run: "these words, do you see? were like magic." The actual words described as producing the magical effect are "heart" and "honor."

"Of similar character is a curious mistake at page 245.

"He is a *gueux fini* and an attack will not save him," added Nicholas. "A—yes," said the widow.

Many readers of Mr. Town's translation have no doubt been puzzled to perceive the force or relevancy of the widow's "A—yes" in this case. I have not the original before me, but take it for granted that it runs thus, or nearly so:—"*Il est un gueux fini et un assaut ne l'intimidera pas.*" "*Un—oui!*" *dit la veuve.*

It must be observed that, in vivacious French colloquy, the *oui* seldom implies assent to the letter, but generally to the spirit, of a proposition. Thus a Frenchman usually says "yes" where an Englishman would say "no." The latter's reply, for example, to the sentence "An attack will not intimidate him," would be "No"—that is to say, "I grant you that it would not." The Frenchman, however, answers "Yes"—meaning "I agree with what you say—it would not." Both replies, of course, reaching the same point, although by opposite routes. With this understanding, it will be seen that the true version of the widow's "*Un—oui!*" should be, "*One* attack, I grant you, might not," and that this *is* the version becomes apparent when we read the words immediately following—"but *every* day—*every* day it is hell!"

An instance of another class of even more reprehensible blunders, is to be found on page 297, where Bras-Rouge is made to say to a police officer: "No matter; it is not of that I complain; every trade has its *disagreements.*" Here, no doubt, the French is *désagrémens*—incon-

veniences — disadvantages — unpleasantnesses. *Désagrémens* conveys disagreements not even so nearly as, in Latin, *religio* implies religion.

I was not a little surprised, in turning over these pages, to come upon the admirable, thrice admirable story called "Gringalet et Coupe en Deux," which is related by *Pique-Vinaigre* to his companions in *La Force*. Rarely have I read any thing of which the exquisite *skill* so delighted me. For my soul I could not suggest a fault in it—except, perhaps, that the intention of telling a *very* pathetic story is a little too transparent.

But I say that I was *surprised* in coming upon this story—and I *was* so, because one of its points has been suggested to M. Sue by a tale of my own. *Coupe en Deux* has an ape remarkable for its size, strength, ferocity, and propensity to imitation. Wishing to commit a murder so cunningly that discovery would be impossible, the master of this animal teaches it to imitate the functions of a barber, and incites it to cut the throat of a child, under the idea that, when the murder is discovered, it will be considered the uninstigated deed of the ape.

On first seeing this, I felt apprehensive that some of my friends would accuse me of plagiarizing from it my "Murders in the Rue Morgue." But I soon called to mind that this latter was first published in *Graham's Magazine* for April, 1841. Some years ago, the Paris *Charivari* copied my story with complimentary comments; objecting, however, to the *Rue Morgue* on the

ground that no such street (to the *Charivari's* knowledge) existed in Paris. I do not wish, of course, to look upon M. Sue's adaptation of my property in any other light than that of a compliment. The similarity *may* have been entirely accidental.

CXI.

Has any one observed the excessively close resemblance in subject, thought, general manner, and particular point, which this clever composition * bears to the "Hudibras" of Butler?

CXII.

The *a priori* reasoners upon government are, of all plausible people, the most preposterous. They only argue too cleverly to permit my thinking them silly enough to be themselves deceived by their own arguments. Yet even this is possible; for there is something in the vanity of logic which addles a man's brains. Your true logician gets, in time, to be logicalized, and then, so far as regards himself, the universe is one *word*. A thing, for him, no longer exists. He deposits upon a sheet of paper a certain assemblage of syllables, and fancies that their meaning is riveted by the act of deposition. I am serious in the opinion that some such process of thought passes through the mind of the "practiced" logician, as he makes note of the thesis proposed. He is not aware that he thinks in this way—but, unwittingly, he so thinks. The syllables deposited acquire, in his view, a new char-

* The "*Satyre Menipée.*"

acter. While afloat in his brain, he might have been brought to admit the possibility that these syllables were variable exponents of various phases of thought; but he will not admit this if he once gets them upon the paper.

In a single page of "Mill," I find the word "force" employed four times; and each employment varies the idea. The fact is that *a priori* argument is much worse than useless except in the mathematical sciences, where it is possible to obtain *precise* meanings. If there is any one subject in the world to which it is utterly and radically inapplicable, that subject is Government. The *identical* arguments used to sustain Mr. Bentham's positions, might, with little exercise of ingenuity, be made to overthrow them; and, by ringing small changes on the words "leg-of-mutton," and "turnip" (changes so *gradual* as to escape detection), I could "*demonstrate*" that a turnip was, is, and of right ought to be, a leg-of-mutton.

CXIII.

The concord of sound-and-sense principle was never better exemplified than in these lines *:—

> Ast amans charæ thalamum puellæ
> Deserit flens, et tibi verba dicit
> Aspera amplexu teneræ cupito a—
> —vulsus amicæ.

CXIV.

Miss Gould has much in common with Mary Howitt;—the characteristic trait of each being a sportive, quaint,

* By *M. Anton. Flaminius.*

epigrammatic grace, that keeps clear of the absurd by never employing itself upon very exalted topics. The verbal style of the two ladies is identical. Miss Gould has the more talent of the two, but is somewhat the less original. She has occasional flashes of a far higher order of merit than appertains to her ordinary manner. Her "Dying Storm" might have been written by Campbell.

CXV.

Cornelius Webbe is one of the best of that numerous school of extravaganzists who sprang from the ruins of Lamb. We must be in perfectly good humor, however, with ourselves and all the world, to be much pleased with such works as "The Man about Town," in which the harum-scarum, hyperexcursive mannerism is carried to an excess which is frequently fatiguing.

CXVI.

Nearly, if not quite the best "Essay on a Future State."* The arguments called "Deductions *from* our Reason," are, rightly enough, addressed more to the *feelings* (a vulgar term not to be done without) than *to* our reason. The arguments deduced from Revelation are (also rightly enough) brief. The pamphlet proves nothing, of course; its theorem is not to be proved.

CXVII.

The style is so involute,† that one cannot help fancying

* A sermon on a future state, combating the opinion that "Death is an Eternal Sleep." By Gilbert Austin. London. 1794.

† "Night and Morning."

it must be falsely constructed. If the use of language is to convey ideas, then it is nearly as much a demerit that our words seem to be, as that they are, indefensible. A man's grammar, like Cæsar's wife, must not only be pure, but above suspicion of impurity.

CXVIII.

It is the curse of a certain order of mind, that it can never rest satisfied with the consciousness of its ability to do a thing. Not even is it content with doing it. It must both know and show how it was done.

CXIX.

Not so:—a gentleman with a pug nose is a contradiction in terms.—"Who can live idly and without manual labor, and will bear the port, charge, and *countenance* of a gentleman."— *Sir Thomas Smith's "Commonwealth of England."*

CXX.

Here is something at which I find it impossible not to laugh *; and yet, I laugh without knowing why. That incongruity is the principle of non-convulsive laughter, is to my mind as clearly demonstrated as any problem in the "Principia Mathematica"; but here I cannot trace the incongruous. It is there, I know. Still I do not see it. In the mean time let me laugh.

* Translation of the Book of Jonah into German hexameters. By J. G. A. Müller. Contained in the "*Memorabilien*" *von Paulus.*

CXXI.

So violent was the state of parties in England, that I was assured by several that the Duke of Marlborough was a coward and Pope a fool.—*Voltaire.*

Both propositions have since been very seriously entertained, quite independently of all party feeling. That Pope was a fool, indeed seems to be an established point at present with the Crazyites—what else shall I call them?

CXXII.

Imitators are not, necessarily, unoriginal—except at the exact points of the imitation. Mr. Longfellow, decidedly the most audacious imitator in America, is markedly original, or, in other words, imaginative, upon the whole; and many persons have, from the latter branch of the fact, been at a loss to comprehend, and therefore, to believe, the former. Keen sensibility of appreciation—that is to say, the poetic *sentiment* (in distinction from the poetic *power*) leads almost inevitably to imitation. Thus all great poets have been gross imitators. It is, however, a mere *non distributio medii* hence to infer, that all great imitators are poets.

CXXIII.

With all his faults, however, this author is a man of respectable powers.

Thus discourses, of *William Godwin*, the "*London Monthly Magazine*," May, 1818.

CXXIV.

As a descriptive poet, Mr. Street is to be highly commended. He not only describes with force and fidelity—

giving us a clear conception of the thing described—but never describes what, to the poet, should be nondescript. He appears, however, not at any time to have been aware that *mere* description is not poetry at all. We demand creation—ποιησις. About Mr. Street there seems to be no spirit. He is all matter—substance—what the chemist would call "simple substance"—and exceedingly simple it is.

CXXV.

I never read a personally abusive paragraph in the newspapers, without calling to mind the pertinent query propounded by Johnson to Goldsmith:—"My dear Doctor, what harm does it do a man to call him Holofernes?"

CXXVI.

Were I to consign these volumes,* altogether, to the hands of any very young friend of mine, I could not, in conscience, describe them otherwise than as "*tam multi, tam grandes, tam pretiosi codices*"; and it would grieve me much to add the "*incendite omnes illas membranas.*"†

CXXVII.

In reading some books we occupy ourselves chiefly with the thoughts of the author; in perusing others, exclusively with our own. And this‡ is one of the "others"—a suggestive book. But there are two classes of suggestive

* Of Voltaire.

† St. Austin *de libris Manichæis.*

‡ Mercier's "*L'an deux mille quatre cents quarante.*"

books—the positively and the negatively suggestive. The former suggests by what they say; the latter by what they might and should have said. It makes little difference, after all. In either case the true book-purpose is answered.

CXXVIII.

It is observable that, in his brief account of the Creation, Moses employs the words, *Bara Elohim* (the *Gods* created), no less than thirty times; using the noun in the plural with the verb in the singular. Elsewhere, however —in Deuteronomy, for example—he employs the singular, *Eloah*

CXXIX.

It is a thousand pities that the puny witticisms of a few professional objectors should have power to prevent, even for a year, the adoption of a name for our country. At present we have, clearly, none. There should be no hesitation about "Appalachia." In the first place it is distinctive. "America" * is not, and can never, be made so. *We* may legislate as much as we please, and assume for our country whatever name we think right—but to us it will be no name, to any purpose for which a name is needed, unless we can take it away from the regions which employ it at present. South America is "America," and will insist upon remaining so. In the second place, "Appalachia" is indigenous, springing from one of the

* Mr. Field, in a meeting of the "New York Historical Society," proposed that we take the name of "America," and bestow "Columbia" upon the continent.

most magnificent and distinctive features of the country itself. Thirdly, in employing this word we do honor to the Aborigines, whom, hitherto, we have at all points unmercifully despoiled, assassinated, and dishonored. Fourthly, the name is the suggestion of, perhaps, the most deservedly eminent among all the pioneers of American literature. It is but just that Mr. Irving should name the land for which, in letters, he first established a name. The last, and by far the most truly important consideration of all, however, is the music of "Appalachia" itself; nothing could be more sonorous, more liquid, or of fuller volume, while its length is just sufficient for dignity. How the guttural "Alleghania" could ever have been preferred for a moment is difficult to conceive. I yet hope to find "Appalachia" assumed.

CXXX.

The "British Spy" of Wirt seems an imitation of the "Turkish Spy," upon which Montesquieu's "Persian Letters" are also based. Marana's work was in *Italian*—Dr. Johnson errs.

CXXXI.

M——, as a matter of course, would rather be abused by the critics, than not be noticed by them at all; but he is hardly to be blamed for growling a little, now and then, over their criticisms—just as a dog might do if pelted with bones.

CXXXII.

About the "Antigone," as about all the ancient plays, there seems to me a certain *baldness*, the result of inex-

perience in art, but which pedantry would force us to believe the result of a studied and supremely artistic simplicity. Simplicity, indeed, is a very important feature in all true art—but *not* the simplicity which we see in the Greek drama. That of the Greek sculpture is every thing than can be desired, because here the art in itself is simplicity in itself and in its elements. The Greek sculptor chiselled his forms from what he saw before him every day, in a beauty nearer to perfection than any work of any Cleomenes in the world. But in the drama, the direct, straightforward, *un-German* Greek had no Nature so immediately presented from which to make a copy. He did what he could—but I do not hesitate to say that that was exceedingly little worth. The profound sense of one or two tragic, or rather, melo-dramatic elements (such as the idea of inexorable Destiny,—this sense gleaming at intervals from out the darkness of the ancient stage, serves, in the very imperfection of its development, to show, not the dramatic ability, but the dramatic *in*ability of the ancients. In a word, the simple arts spring into perfection at their origin ; the complex as inevitably demand the long and painfully progressive experience of ages. To the Greeks, beyond doubt, their drama *seemed* perfection—it fully answered to them, the dramatic end, excitement, and this fact is urged as proof of their drama's perfection in itself. It need only be said in reply, that their art and their sense of art were, necessarily, on a level.

CXXXIII.

That man is not truly brave who is afraid either to seem or to be, when it suits him, a coward.

CXXXIV.

A currupt and impious heart—a merely prurient fancy—a Saturnian brain in which invention has only the phosphorescent glimmer of rottenness.* Worthless, body and soul—a foul reproach to the nation that engendered and endures him—a fetid battener upon the garbage of thought—no man—a beast—a pig: Less scrupulous than a carrion-crow, and not very much less filthy than a Wilmer.

CXXXV.

If ever mortal "wreaked his thoughts upon expression," it was *Shelley*. If ever a poet sang—as a bird sings—earnestly—impulsively—with utter abandonment—to himself solely—and for the mere joy of his own song—that poet was the author of "The Sensitive Plant." Of art—beyond that which is instinctive with genius—he either had little or disdained all. He *really* disdained that Rule which is an emanation from law, because his own soul was Law in itself. His rhapsodies are but the rough notes—the stenographic memoranda of poems—memoranda which, because they were all-sufficient for his own intelligence, he cared not to be at the trouble of writing out in full for mankind. In all his works we find

* Michel Masson, author of "*Le Cœur d'une Jeune Fille.*"

no conception thoroughly wrought. For this reason he is the most fatiguing of poets. Yet he wearies in saying too little rather than too much. What, in him, seems the diffuseness of one idea, is the conglomerate concision of many: and this species of concision it is which renders him obscure. With such a man to imitate was out of the question. It would have served no purpose; for he spoke to his own spirit alone, which would have comprehended no alien tongue. Thus he was profoundly original. His quaintness arose from intuitive perception of that truth to which Bacon alone has given distinct utterance—"There is no exquisite beauty which has not some strangeness in its proportions." But whether obscure, original, or quaint, Shelley had no *affectations*. He was at all times sincere.

From his *ruins* there sprang into existence, affronting the heavens, a tottering and fantastic *pagoda;* in which the salient angles, tipped with mad jangling bells, were the idiosyncratic *faults* of the original—faults which cannot be considered such in view of his purposes, but which are monstrous when we regard his works as addressed to mankind. A "school" arose—if that absurd term must still be employed—a school—a system of *rules* upon the basis of the Shelley who had none. Young men innumerable, dazzled with the glare and bewildered by the *bizarrerie* of the lightning that flickered through the clouds of "Alastor" had no trouble whatever in heaping up imitative vapors, but, for the lightning, were forced to

be content with its *spectrum*, in which the *bizarrerie* appeared without the fire. Nor were mature minds unimpressed by the contemplation of a greater and more mature; and thus, gradually into this school of all lawlessness—of obscurity, quaintness, and exaggeration—were interwoven the out-of-place didacticism of Wordsworth, and the more anomalous metaphysicianism of Coleridge. Matters were now fast verging to their worst; and at length, in *Tennyson*, poetic inconsistency attained its extreme. But it was precisely this extreme (for the greatest truth and the greatest error are scarcely two points in a circle) which, following the law of all extremes, wrought in him (Tennyson) a natural and inevitable revulsion; leading him first to contemn, and secondly to investigate, his early manner, and finally to winnow, from its magnificent elements, the truest and purest of all poetical styles. But not even yet is the process complete; and for this reason in part, but chiefly on account of the mere fortuitousness of that mental and moral combination which shall unite in one person (if *ever* it shall) the Shelley *abandon* and the Tennysonian poetic sense, with the most profound Art (based both in Instinct and *Analysis*) and the sternest Will properly to blend and rigorously to control all—chiefly, I say, because such combination of seeming antagonisms will be only a "happy chance"—the world has never yet seen the noblest poem which, possibly, *can* be composed.

CXXXVI.

It is not *proper* (to use a gentle word), nor does it seem courageous, to attack our foe by name in spirit and in effect, so that all the world shall know whom we mean, while we say to ourselves: "I have not attacked this man by name in the eye, and according to the *letter*, of the law"—yet how often are men who call themselves gentlemen guilty of this meanness! We need reform at this point of our Literary Morality:—very sorely, too, at another—the system of anonymous reviewing. Not one respectable word can be said in defence of this most unfair—this most despicable and cowardly practice.

CXXXVII.

To villify a great man is the readiest way in which a little man can himself attain greatness. The Crab might never have become a Constellation but for the courage it evinced in nibbling Hercules on the heel.

CXXXVIII.

I hardly know how to account for the repeated failures of John Neal as regards the *construction* of his works. His art is great and of a high character; but it is massive and undetailed. He seems to be either deficient in a sense of completeness, or unstable in temperament; so that he becomes wearied with his work before getting it done. He always begins well—vigorously—startlingly—proceeds by fits—much at random—now prosing, now gossiping, now running away with his subject, now excit-

ing vivid interest; but his conclusions are sure to be hurried and indistinct; so that the reader, perceiving a falling-off where he expects a climax, is pained, and, closing the book with dissatisfaction, is in no mood to give the author credit for the vivid sensations which have been aroused *during the progress* of perusal. Of all literary foibles, the most fatal, perhaps, is that of defective climax. Nevertheless, I should be inclined to rank John Neal first, or at all events second, among our men of indisputable *genius*. Is it or is it not a fact, that the air of a Democracy agrees better with mere Talent than with Genius?

CXXXIX.

Among the moralists who keep themselves erect by the perpetual swallowing of pokers, it is the fashion to decry the "fashionable" novels. These works have their demerits; but a vast influence which they exert for an undeniable good has never yet been duly considered. "Ingenu*os* didicisse fideliter *libros*, emollit mores nec sinit esse feros." Now, the fashionable novels are just the books which most do circulate among the class *un*fashionable; and their effect in softening the worst callosities—in smoothing the most disgusting asperities of vulgarism—is prodigious. With the herd, to admire and to attempt imitation are the same thing. What if, in this case, the manners imitated are frippery; better frippery than brutality—and, after all, there is little danger that the intrinsic value of the sturdiest iron will be impaired by a coating of even the most diaphanous gilt.

CXL.

The ancients had at least half an idea that we travelled on horseback to heaven. See a passage of Passeri, "*de animæ transvectione*"—quoted by Caylus. See, also, many old tombs.

CXLI.

It is said in Isaiah, respecting Idumea, that "none shall pass through thee for ever and ever." Dr. Keith here* insists, as usual, upon understanding the passage in its most strictly literal sense. He attempts to prove that neither Burckhardt nor Irby passed *through* the country —merely penetrating to Petra, and returning. And our Mr. John Stephens entered Idumea with the deliberate design of putting the question to test. He wished to see whether it was meant that Idumea should not be passed through, and "accordingly," says he, "I passed through it from one end to the other." Here is error on all sides. In the first place, he was not sufficiently informed in the Ancient Geography to know that the Idumea which he certainly did pass through, is *not* the Idumea or Edom, intended in the prophecy—the latter lying much farther eastward. In the next place, whether he did or did not pass through the true Idumea—or whether anybody, of late days, did or did not pass through it—is a point of no consequence either to the proof or to the disproof of the literal fulfilment of the Prophecies. For it is quite a mistake on the part of Dr. Keith—his supposition that travelling through Idumea is prohibited at all.

* "Literal Fulfilment of the Prophecies."

The words conceived to embrace the prohibition are found in Isaiah xxxiv.: 10, and are *Lenetsach netsachim ēin over bah*, literally: *Lenetsach*, for an eternity; *netsachim*, of eternities; *ēin*, not; *over*, moving about; *bah*, in it. That is to say,—for an eternity of eternities, (there shall) not (be any one) moving about *in it*—not *through* it. The participle *over* refers to one moving to and fro, or up and down, and is the same term which is translated "current" as an epithet of money, in Genesis xxiii.: 16. The prophet means only that there shall be no mark of life in the land—no living being there—no one moving up and down in it. He refers merely to its general abandonment and desolation.

In the same way we have received an erroneous idea of the meaning of Ezekiel xxxiv.: 7, where the same region is mentioned. The common version runs: "Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth,"—a sentence which Dr. Keith views as he does the one from Isaiah; that is, he supposes it to forbid any travelling in Idumea under penalty of death; instancing Burckhardt's death, shortly after his return, as confirming this supposition, on the ground that he died in consequence of the rash attempt.

Now the words of Ezekiel are:—*Venathati eth-har Sēir leshimmamah ushemamah, vehichrati mimmennu over vasal;*—literally: *Venathati*, and I will give; *eth-har*, the mountain; *Sēir*, Seir; *leshimmamah*, for a desolation;

ushemamah, and a desolation ; *vehichrati*, and I will cut off ; *mimmennu*, from it ; *over*, him that goeth ; *vasal*, and him that returneth ;—and I will give Mount Seir for an utter desolation, and I will cut off from it him that *passeth and repasseth* therein. The reference here is as in the preceding passage : allusion is made to the inhabitants of the land, as moving about in it, and actively employed in the business of life. I am sustained in the translation of *over vasal* by Gesenius, S 5, vol. 2, p. 570, *Leo's Trans.* Compare also Zachariah vii. : 14 and ix. : 8. There is something analogous in the Hebrew Greek phrase, at Acts ix.: 28—*και ην μετ' αυτοω εισπορευομενος και 'εκπορευομενος ιν 'Ιερουραλημ*—And he was with them in Jerusalem, coming in and going out. The Latin *versatus est* is precisely paraphrastic. The meaning is that Saul, the new convert, was on intimate terms with the true believers in Jerusalem ; moving about among them to and fro, or in and out.

CXLII.

The author of " Cromwell " does better as a writer of ballads than of prose. He has fancy, and a fine conception of rhythm. But his romantico-histories have all the effervescence of his verse, without its flavor. Nothing worse than his *tone* can be invented : —turgid sententiousness, involute, spasmodically straining after effect. And to render matters worse, he is as thoroughly an unistylist as Cardinal Chigi, who boasted that he wrote with the same pen for half a century.

CXLIII.

Our "blues" are increasing in number at a great rate; and should be decimated, at the very least. Have we no critic with nerve enough to hang a dozen or two of them, *in terrorem?* He must use a silk cord, of course—as they do, in Spain, with all grandees of the *blue* blood—of the "*sangre azula.*"

CXLIV.

> For all the rhetorician's rules
> Teach nothing but to name the tools.—HUDIBRAS.

What these oft-quoted lines go to show is, that a falsity in verse will travel faster and endure longer than a falsity in prose. The man who would sneer or stare at a silly proposition nakedly put, will admit that "there is a good deal in that" when "*that*" is the point of an epigram shot into the ear. The rhetorician's rules—if they *are* rules—teach him not only to name his tools, but to use his tools, the capacity of his tools—their extent—their limit—and, from an examination of the nature of the tools—(an examination forced on him by their constant presence)—force him, also, into scrutiny and comprehension of the material on which the tools are employed, and thus, finally, suggest and give birth to new material for new tools.

CXLV.

Among his *eidola* of the den, the tribe, the forum, the theatre, etc., Bacon might well have placed the great *eidolon* of the parlor (or of the wit, as I have termed it in

one of the previous Marginalia) the idol whose worship blinds man to truth by dazzling him with the *apposite*. But what title could have been invented for *that* idol which has propagated, perhaps, more of gross error than all combined?—the one, I mean, which demands from its votaries that they reciprocate cause and effect—reason in a circle—lift themselves from the ground by pulling up their pantaloons—and carry themselves on their own heads, in hand-baskets, from Beersheba to Dan.

All—absolutely all the argumentation which I have seen on the nature of the soul, or of the Deity, seems to me nothing but worship of this unnamable idol. *Pour savoir ce qu'est Dieu*, says Bielfeld, although nobody listens to the solemn truth, *il faut être Dieu même*—and to reason about the reason is of all things the most unreasonable. At least, he alone is fit to discuss the topic who perceives at a glance the insanity of its discussion.

CXLVI.

I believe it is Montaigne who says: "People talk about thinking, but, for my part, I never begin to think until I sit down to write." A better plan for him would have been, never to sit down to write until he had made an end of thinking.

CXLVII.

No doubt, the association of idea is somewhat singular—but I never can hear a crowd of people singing and gesticulating, all together, at an Italian opera, without fancying myself at Athens, listening to that peculiar tragedy,

by Sophocles, in which he introduces a full chorus of turkeys, who set about bewailing the death of Meleager. It is noticeable in this connection, by the way, that there is not a goose in the world who, in point of sagacity, would not feel itself insulted in being compared with a turkey. The French seem to feel this. In Paris, I am sure, no one would think of saying to Mr. F——, "What a goose you are!"—"Quel *dindon* tu es!" would be the phrase employed as equivalent.

CXLVIII.

Alas! how many American critics neglect the happy suggestion of M. Timon—"*que le ministre de l' instruction publique doit lui-même savoir parler français.*"

CXLIX.

It is folly to assert, as some at present are fond of asserting, that the Literature of any nation or age was ever injured by plain speaking on the part of the Critics. As for American Letters, plain-speaking about *them* is, simply, the one thing needed. They are in a condition of absolute quagmire—a quagmire, to use the words of Victor Hugo, *d' où on ne peut se tirer par des periphrases —par des quemadmodums et des verumenimveros.*

CL.

It is certainly very remarkable that although destiny is the ruling idea of the Greek drama, the word *Τυχη* (Fortune) does not appear once in the whole Iliad.

CLI.

Had John Bornouilli lived to have the experience of Fuller's occiput and sinciput, he would have abandoned, in dismay, his theory of the non-existence of hard bodies.

CLII.

They have ascertained, in China, that the abdomen is the seat of the soul; and the acute Greeks considered it a waste of words to employ more than a single term, *φρένες*, for the expression both of the mind and of the diaphragm.

CLIII.

Mr. Grattan, who, in general, writes well, has a bad habit of loitering—of toying with his subject, as a cat with a mouse, instead of grasping it firmly at once, and devouring it without ado. He takes up too much time in the ante-room. He has never done with his introductions. Sometimes one introduction is merely the vestibule to another; so that by the time he arrives at his main theme, there is none of it left. He is afflicted with a perversity common enough even among otherwise good talkers—an irrepressible desire of tantalizing by circumlocution.

If the greasy print here exhibited is, indeed, like Mr. Grattan,* then is Mr. Grattan like nobody else—for who else ever thrust forth, from beneath a wig of wire, the countenance of an over-done apple dumpling?

* "Highways and By-Ways."

CLIV.

"What does a man learn by travelling?" demanded Doctor Johnson, one day, in a great rage—"What did Lord Charlemont learn in his travels, except that there was a snake in one of the pyramids of Egypt?"—but had Doctor Johnson lived in the days of the Silk Buckinghams, he would have seen that, so far from thinking anything of finding a snake in a pyramid, your traveller would take his oath, at a moment's notice, of having found a pyramid in a snake.

CLV.

The author of "*Miserrimus*" *might have been* W. G. Simms (whose "*Martin Faber*" is just such a work)—but *is* * G. M. W. Reynolds, an Englishman, who wrote, also, "*Albert de Rosann*" and "Pickwick Abroad,"—both excellent things in their way.

CLVI.

L—— is busy in attempting to prove that his play was not fairly d——d—that it is only "skotched, not killed"; but if the poor play could speak from the tomb, I fancy it would sing with the opera heroine:

> The flattering error cease to prove!
> Oh, *let* me be deceased!

CLVII.

We may safely grant that the *effects* of the oratory of Demosthenes were vaster than those wrought by the elo-

* [Mr. Poe was wrong. "Miserrimus" was written by W. M. Reynolds, who died at Fontainbleau in 1850.—*Ed.*]

quence of any modern, and yet not controvert the idea that the modern eloquence, itself, is superior to that of the Greek. The Greeks were an excitable, *unread* race, for they had no printed books. *Vivâ voce* exhortations carried with them, to their quick apprehensions, all the gigantic force of *the new.* They had much of that vivid interest which the first fable has upon the dawning intellect of the child—an interest which is worn away by the frequent perusal of similar things—by the frequent inception of similar fancies. The suggestions, the arguments, the incitements of the ancient rhetorician were, when compared with those of the modern, absolutely novel; possessing thus an immense adventitious force—a force which has been, oddly enough, left out of sight in all estimates of the eloquence of the two eras.

The finest philippic of the Greek would have been hooted at in the British House of Peers, while an impromtu of Sheridan, or of Brougham, would have carried by storm all the hearts and all the intellects of Athens.

CLVIII.

Much has been said, of late, about the necessity of maintaining a proper *nationality* in American Letters; but what this nationality *is*, or what is to be gained by it, has never been distinctly understood. That an American should confine himself to American themes, or even prefer them, is rather a political than a literary idea—and at best is a questionable point. We would do well to bear in mind that "distance lends enchantment to the view."

Ceteris paribus, a foreign theme is, in a strictly literary sense, to be preferred. After all, the world at large is the only legitimate stage for the autorial *histrio*.

But of the need of *that* nationality which defends our own literature, sustains our own men of letters, upholds our own dignity, and depends upon our own resources, there can not be the shadow of a doubt. Yet here is the very point at which we are most supine. We complain of our want of International Copyright, on the ground that this want justifies our publishers in inundating us with British opinion in British books; and yet when these very publishers, at their own obvious risk, and even obvious loss, do publish an American book, we turn up our noses at it with supreme contempt (this is a general thing) until it (the American book) has been dubbed "readable" by some illiterate Cockney critic. Is it too much to say that, with us, the opinion of Washington Irving—of Prescott—of Bryant—is a mere nullity in comparison with that of any anonymous sub-sub-editor of the *Spectator*, the *Athenæum*, or the London *Punch*? It is *not* saying too much to say this. It is a solemn—an absolutely awful fact. Every publisher in the country will admit it to be a fact. There is not a more disgusting spectacle under the sun than our subserviency to British criticism. It is disgusting, first, because it is truckling, servile, pusillanimous—secondly, because of its gross irrationality. We *know* the British to bear us little but ill will—we know that, in no case, do they utter unbiassed opinions of American

books—we know that in the few instances in which our writers have been treated with common decency in England, these writers have either openly paid homage to English institutions, or have had lurking at the bottom of their hearts a secret principle at war with Democracy:—we *know* all this, and yet, day after day, submit our necks to the degrading yoke of the crudest opinion that emanates from the fatherland. Now if we *must* have nationality, let it be a nationality that will throw off this yoke.

The chief of the rhapsodists who have ridden us to death like the Old Man of the Mountain, is the ignorant and egotistical Wilson. We use the term rhapsodists with perfect deliberation; for, Macaulay, and Dilke, and one or two others, excepted, there is not in Great Britain a critic who can be fairly considered worthy the name. The Germans, and even the French, are infinitely superior. As regards Wilson, no man ever penned worse criticism or better rhodomontade. That he is "egotistical" his works show to all men, running as they read. That he is "ignorant" let his absurd and continuous school-boy blunders about Homer bear witness. Not long ago we ourselves pointed out a series of similar inanities in his review of Miss Barret's poems—a series, we say, of gross blunders, arising from sheer ignorance—and we defy him or any one to answer a single syllable of what we then advanced.

And yet this is the man whose simple *dictum* (to our shame be it spoken) has the power to make or to mar any American reputation! In the last number of *Black-*

wood, he has a continuation of the dull "Specimens of the British Critics," and makes occasion wantonly to insult one of the noblest of our poets, Mr. Lowell. The point of the whole attack consists in the use of slang epithets and phrases of the most ineffably vulgar description. "Squabashes" is a pet term. "Faugh!" is another. "We are Scotsmen to *the spine!*" says Sawney—as if the thing were not more than self-evident. Mr. Lowell is called a "magpie," an "ape," a "Yankee cockney," and his name is intentionally mis-written *John* Russell Lowell. Now were these indecencies perpetrated by an American critic, that critic would be sent to Coventry by the whole press of the country, but since it is Wilson who insults, we, as in duty bound, not only submit to the insult, but echo it, as an excellent jest, throughout the length and breadth of the land. *Quamdiu Catilina?* We do indeed demand the nationality of self-respect. In Letters as in Government we require a Declaration of Independence. A better thing still would be a Declaration of War—and that war should be carried forthwith "into Africa."

CLIX.

The *Doctor* has excited great attention in America as well as in England, and has given rise to every variety of conjecture and opinion, not only concerning the author's individuality, but in relation to the meaning, purpose, and character of the book itself. It is now said to be the work of one author—now of two, three, four, five—as far even as nine or ten. These writers are sometimes

thought to have composed the *Doctor* conjointly—sometimes to have written each a portion. These individual portions have even been pointed out by the supremely acute, and the names of their respective fathers assigned. Supposed discrepancies of taste and manner, together with the prodigal introduction of mottoes, and other scraps of erudition (apparently beyond the compass of a single individual's reading) have given rise to this idea of a multiplicity of writers—among whom are mentioned in turn all the most witty, all the most eccentric, and especially all the most learned of Great Britain. Again—in regard to the nature of the book. It has been called an imitation of Sterne—an august and most profound exemplification, under the garb of eccentricity, of some all-important moral law—a true, under guise of a fictitious, biography—a simple jeu d' esprit—a mad farrago by a Bedlamite, and a great multiplicity of other equally fine names and hard. Undoubtedly, the best method of arriving at a decision in relation to a work of this nature is to read it through with attention, and thus see what can be made of it. We have done so, and can make nothing of it, and are therefore clearly of opinion that the *Doctor* is precisely—nothing. We mean to say that it is nothing better than *a hoax*.

That any serious truth is meant to be inculcated by a tissue of bizarre and disjointed rhapsodies, whose *general* meaning no person can fathom, is a notion altogether untenable, unless we suppose the author a madman. But

there are none of the proper evidences of madness in the book—while of mere *banter* there are instances innumerable. One half, at least, of the entire publication is taken up with palpable quizzes, reasonings in a circle, sentences, like the nonsense verses of Du Bartas, evidently framed to mean nothing, while wearing an air of profound thought, and grotesque speculations in regard to the probable excitement to be created by the book.

It appears to have been written with a sole view (or nearly with the sole view) of exciting inquiry and comment. That this object should be fully accomplished cannot be thought very wonderful, when we consider the excessive trouble taken to accomplish it, by vivid and powerful intellect. That the *Doctor* is the offspring of such intellect, is proved sufficiently by many passages of the book, where the writer appears to have been led off from his main design. That it is written by more than one man should not be deduced either from the apparent immensity of its erudition, or from discrepancies of style. That man is a desperate mannerist who cannot vary his style *ad infinitum;* and although the book *may* have been written by a number of learned *bibliophagi*, still there is, we think, nothing to be found in the book itself at variance with the possibility of its being written by any one individual of even mediocre reading. Erudition is only certainly known in its *total* results. The mere grouping together of mottoes from the greatest multiplicity of the rarest works, or even the apparently

natural inweaving into any composition, of the sentiments and manner of these works, are attainments within the reach of any well-informed, ingenious, and industrious man having access to the great libraries of London. Moreover, while a single individual possessing these requisities and opportunities, might, through a rabid desire of *creating a sensation*, have written, with some trouble, the *Doctor*, it is by no means easy to imagine that a plurality of sensible persons could be found willing to embark in such absurdity from a similar, or indeed from any imaginable inducement.

The present edition of the Harpers consists of two volumes in one. Volume one commences with a *Prelude of Mottoes* occupying two pages. Then follows a *Postscript*—then a *Table of Contents to the first volume*, occupying eighteen pages. Volume two has a similar *Prelude of Mottoes* and *Table of Contents*. The whole is subdivided into Chapters Ante-Initial, Initial, and Post-Initial, with Inter-Chapters. The pages have now and then a typographical *queerity*—a monogram, a scrap of grotesque music, old English, etc. Some characters of this latter kind are printed with colored ink in the British edition, which is gotten up with great care. All these oddities are in the manner of Sterne, and some of them are exceedingly well conceived. The work professes to be a Life of one Doctor Daniel Dove and his horse Nobs—but we should put no very great faith in this biography. On the back of the book is a monogram—which appears

again once or twice in the text, and whose solution is a fertile source of trouble with all readers. This monogram is a triangular pyramid; and as, in geometry, the solidity of every polyhedral body may be computed by dividing the body into pyramids, the pyramid is thus considered as the base or essence of every polyhedron. The author then, after his own fashion, may mean to imply that his book is the basis of all solidity or wisdom—or perhaps, since the polyhedron is not only a solid, but a solid terminated by *plane faces*, that the *Doctor* is the very essence of all that spurious wisdom which will terminate in just nothing at all—in a hoax, and a consequent multiplicity of *black visages*. The wit and humor of the *Doctor* have seldom been equalled. We cannot think Southey wrote it, but have no idea who did.

CLX.

These twelve Letters* are occupied, in part, with minute details of such atrocities on the part of the British, during their sojourn in Charleston, as the quizzing of Mrs. Wilkinson and the pilfering of her shoe-buckles—the remainder being made up of the indignant comments of Mrs. Wilkinson herself.

It is very true, as the Preface assures us, that "few records exist of American women either before or during the war of the Revolution, and that those perpetuated by

* "Letters of Eliza Wilkinson, during the Invasion and Possession of Charleston, S. C., by the British, in the Revolutionary War." Arranged by Caroline Gilman.

History want the charm of personal narration,"—but then we are well delivered from such charms of personal narration as we find here. The only supposable merit in the compilation is that dogged air of truth with which the fair authoress relates the lamentable story of her misadventures. I look in vain for that "useful information" about which I have heard—unless, indeed, it is in the passage where we are told that the letter-writer "was a young and beautiful widow; that her hand-writing is clear and feminine; and that the letters were copied by herself into a blank quarto book, on which the extravagant sale-price marks one of the features of the times":—there are other extravagant sale-prices, however, besides that;—it was seventy-five cents that I paid for these "Letters." Besides, they are silly, and I cannot conceive why Mrs. Gilman thought the public wished to read them. It is really too bad for her to talk at a body, in this style, about "gathering relics of past history," and "floating down streams of time."

As for Mrs. Wilkinson, I am rejoiced that she lost her shoe-buckles.

CLXI.

Advancing briskly with a rapier, he *did the business* for him at a blow.—*Smollett.*

This vulgar colloquialism had its type among the Romans,—*Et ferro subitus grassatus, agit rem.—Juvenal.*

CLXII.

It cannot, we think, be a matter of doubt with any reflecting mind, that at least one third of the *reverence*, or of the *affection*, with which we regard the elder poets of Great Britain, should be credited to what is, in itself, a thing apart from poetry—we mean to the simple love of the antique—and that again a third of even the proper *poetic sentiment* inspired by these writings should be ascribed to a fact which, while it has a strict connection with poetry in the abstract, and also with the particular poems in question, must not be looked upon as a merit appertaining to the writers of the poems. Almost every devout reader of the old English bards, if demanded his opinion of their productions, would mention vaguely, yet with perfect sincerity, a sense of dreamy, wild, indefinite, and, he would perhaps say, undefinable, delight. Upon being required to point out the source of this so shadowy pleasure, he would be apt to speak of the quaint in phraseology and of the grotesque in rhythm. And this quaintness and grotesqueness are, as we have elsewhere endeavored to show, very powerful, and, if well managed, very admissible adjuncts to ideality. But in the present instance they arise independently of the author's will, and are matters apart from his intention.

CLXIII.

As to this last term ("high-binder") which is so confidently quoted as modern ("not in use, *certainly*, before 1819"), I can refute all that is said by referring to a

journal in my own possession—*The Weekly Inspector*, for Dec. 27, 1806—published in New York:

On Christmas Eve, a party of banditti, amounting, it is stated, to forty or fifty members of an association calling themselves "*High-Binders*," assembled in front of St. Peter's Church, in Barclay Street, expecting that the Catholic ritual would be performed with a degree of pomp and splendor which has usually been omitted in this city. These ceremonies, however, not taking place, the High-Binders manifested great displeasure.

In a subsequent number, the association are called "Hide-Binders." They were Irish.

CLXIV.

Perhaps Mr. Barrow * is right after all, and the dearth of genius in America *is* owing to the continual teasing of the mosquitoes.

CLXV.

The title of this book † deceives us. It is by no means "talk" as men understand it—not that true talk of which Boswell has been the best historiographer. In a word it is not *gossip*, which has been never better defined than by Basil, who calls it "talk for talk's sake," nor more thoroughly comprehended than by Horace Walpole and Mary Wortley Montague, who made it a profession and a purpose. Embracing all things, it has neither beginning, middle, nor end. Thus of the gossiper it was not

* "Voyage to Cochin China."

† "Coleridge's Table-Talk."

properly said that "he commences his discourse by jumping *in medias res*." For, clearly, your gossiper commences not at all. He is begun. He is already begun. He is always begun. In the matter of end he is indeterminate. And by these extremes shall ye know him to be of the Cæsars—*porphyrogenitus*—of the right vein of the true blood—of the blue blood—of the *sangre azula*. As for laws, he is cognizant of but one, the invariable absence of all. And for his road, were it as straight as the Appia and as broad as that "which leadeth to destruction," nevertheless would he be malcontent without a frequent hop-skip-and-jump, over the hedges, into the tempting pastures of digression beyond. Such is the gossiper, and of such alone is the true *talk*. But when Coleridge asked Lamb if he had ever heard him *preach*, the answer was quite happy—"I have never heard you do any thing else." The truth is that "Table Discourse" *might* have answered as a title to this book; but its character can be fully conveyed only in "Post-Prandial Sub-Sermons," or "Three Bottle Sermonoids."

CLXVI.

A rather bold and quite unnecessary plagiarism—from a book too well known to promise impunity.

It is now full time to begin to brush away the insects of literature, whether creeping or fluttering, which have too long crawled over and soiled the intellectual ground of this country. It is high time to shake the little sickly stems of many a

puny plant, and make its fading flowerets fall.—*Monthly Register*, p. 243, vol. 2, New York, 1807.

On the other hand—

I have brushed away the insects of literature, whether fluttering or creeping; I have shaken the little stems of many a puny plant, and the flowerets have fallen.—*Preface to the "Pursuits of Literature."*

CLXVII.

Men of genius are far more abundant than is supposed. In fact, to appreciate thoroughly the work of what we call genius, is to possess all the genius by which the work was produced. But the person appreciating may be utterly incompetent to reproduce the work, or any thing similar, and this solely through lack of what may be termed the constructive ability—a matter quite independent of what we agree to understand in the term "genius" itself. This ability is based, to be sure, in great part, upon the faculty of analysis, enabling the artist to get full view of the machinery of his proposed effect, and thus work it and regulate it at will; but a great deal depends also upon properties strictly moral—for example, upon patience, upon concentrativeness, or the power of holding the attention steadily to the one purpose, upon self-dependence and contempt for all opinion which is opinion and no more —in especial, upon energy or industry. So vitally important is this last, that it may well be doubted if any thing to which we have been accustomed to give the title of a

"work of genius" was ever accomplished without it; and it is chiefly because this quality and genius are nearly incompatible, that "works of genius" are few, while mere men of genius are, as I say, abundant. The Romans, who excelled us in acuteness of *observation*, while falling below us in induction from facts observed, seem to have been so fully aware of the inseparable connection between industry and a "work of genius," as to have adopted the error that industry, in great measure, was genius itself. The highest compliment is intended by a Roman, when, of an epic, or any thing similar, he says that it is written *industriâ mirabili* or *incredibili industriâ*.

CLXVIII.

The merely mechanical style of "Athens" is far better than that of any of Bulwer's previous books. In general he is atrociously involute—this is his main defect. He wraps one sentence in another *ad infinitum*—very much in the fashion of those "nests of boxes" sold in our wooden-ware shops, or like the islands within lakes, within islands within lakes, within islands within lakes, of which we read so much in the "Periplus" of Hanno.

CLXIX.

All true men must rejoice to perceive the decline of the miserable rant and cant against originality, which was so much in vogue a few years ago among a class of microscopical critics, and which at one period threatened to degrade all American literature to the level of Flemish art.

Of puns it has been said that those most dislike who are least able to utter them; but with far more of truth may it be asserted that invectives against originality proceed only from persons at once hypocritical and commonplace. I say hypocritical—for the love of novelty is an indisputable element of the moral nature of man; and since to be original is merely to be novel, the dolt who professes a distaste for originality, in letters or elsewhere, proves in no degree his aversion for the thing in itself, but merely that uncomfortable hatred which ever arises in the heart of an envious man for an excellence he cannot attain.

CLXX.

When I call to mind the preposterous "asides" and soliloquies of the drama among civilized nations, the shifts employed by the Chinese playwrights appear altogether respectable. If a general, on a Pekin or Canton stage, is ordered on an expedition, "he brandishes a whip," says Davis, "or takes in his hand the reins of a bridle, and striding three or four times around a platform, in the midst of a tremendous crash of gongs, drums, and trumpets, finally stops short and tells the audience where he has arrived." It would sometimes puzzle an European stage hero in no little degree to "to tell an audience where he has arrived." Most of them seem to have a very imperfect conception of their whereabouts. In the "Mort de Cæsar," for example, Voltaire makes his populace rush to and fro, exclaiming, "*Courons au Capitole!*" Poor fel-

lows—they are in the capitol all the time ;—in his scruples about unity of place, the author has never once let them out of it.

CLXXI.

Sallust, too. He had much the same free-and-easy idea, and Metternich himself could not have quarrelled with his "*Impune quæ libet facile, id est esse regem.*"

CLXXII.

A ballad entitled "*Indian Serenade*," and put into the mouth of the hero, Vasco Nunez, is, perhaps, the most really meritorious portion of Mr. Simms' "Damsel of Darien." This stanza is full of music :

And their wild and mellow voices
Still to hear along the deep,
Every brooding star rejoices,
While the billow, on its pillow,
Lulled to silence seems to sleep.

And also this :

'T is the wail for life they waken
By Samana's yielding shore—
With the tempest it is shaken ;
The wild ocean is in motion,
And the song is heard no more.

CLXXIII.

Here is a man who is a scholar and an artist, who knows precisely how every effect has been produced by every great writer, and who is resolved to reproduce them. But the heart passes by his pitfalls and traps, and carefully-planned springes, to be taken captive by some simple fellow who expected the event as little as did his prisoner.*

*Lowell's "Conversations."

Perhaps I err in quoting these words as the author's own—they are in the mouth of one of his interlocutors—but whoever claims them, they are poetical and no more. The error is exactly that common one of separating practice from the theory which includes it. In all cases, if the practice fail, it is because the theory is imperfect. If Mr. Lowell's heart be not caught in the pitfall or trap, then the pitfall is ill-concealed and the trap is not properly baited or set. One who has *some artistical ability* may know how to do a thing, and even show how to do it, and yet fail in doing it after all; but the artist and the man of some artistic ability must not be confounded. He only is the former who can carry his most shadowy precepts into successful application. To say that a critic could not have written the work which he criticises, is to put forth a contradiction in terms.

CLXXIV.

Talking of conundrums:—Why will a geologist put no faith in the fable of the fox that lost his tail? Because he knows that no animal remains have ever been found in trap.

CLXXV.

We have long learned to reverence the fine intellect of Bulwer. We take up any production of his pen with a positive certainty that, in reading it, the wildest passions of our nature, the most profound of our thoughts, the brightest visions of our fancy, and the most ennobling and lofty of our aspirations will, in due turn, be kindled within

us. We feel sure of rising from the perusal a wiser if not a better man. In no instance are we deceived. From the brief tale—from the "Monos and Daimonos" of the author, to his most ponderous and labored novels—all is richly, and glowingly intellectual—all is energetic, or astute, or brilliant, or profound. There *may* be men now living who possess the power of Bulwer, but it is quite evident that very few have made that power so palpably manifest. Indeed we know of *none*. Viewing him as a novelist—a point of view exceedingly unfavorable (if we hold to the common acceptation of "the novel") for a proper contemplation of his genius—he is unsurpassed by any writer living or dead. Why should we hesitate to say this, feeling, as we do, thoroughly persuaded of its truth. Scott has excelled him in *many* points, and "The Bride of Lammermuir" is a better book than any individual work by the author of "Pelham"; "Ivanhoe" is, perhaps, equal to any. Descending to particulars, D'Israeli has a more brilliant, a more lofty, and a more delicate (we do not say a *wilder*) imagination. Lady Dacre has written "Ellen Wareham," a more forcible tale of passion. In some species of wit Theodore Hook rivals, and in broad humor our own Paulding surpasses him. The writer of "Godolphin" equals him in energy. Banim is a better sketcher of character. Hope is a richer colorist. Captain Trelawney is as original—Moore is as fanciful, and Horace Smith is as learned. But who is there uniting in one person the imagination, the passion, the humor, the energy, the

knowledge of the heart, the artist-like eye, the originality, the fancy, and the learning of Edward Lytton Bulwer? In a vivid wit—in profundity and a Gothic massiveness of thought—in style—in a calm certainty and definitiveness of purpose—in industry—and above all, in the power of controlling and regulating by volition his illimitable faculties of mind, he is unequalled—he is unapproached.

CLXXVI.

The author of "Richelieu" and "Darnley" is lauded, by a great majority of those who laud him, from mere motives of duty, not of inclination—duty erroneously conceived. He is looked upon as the head and representative of those novelists who, in historical romance, attempt to blend interest with instruction. His sentiments are found to be pure—his *morals* unquestionable, and pointedly shown forth—his language indisputably correct. And for all this, praise, assuredly, but then only a certain degree of praise, should be awarded him. To be pure in his expressed opinions is a duty; and were his language as correct as any spoken, he would speak only as every gentleman should speak. In regard to his historical information, were it much more accurate, and twice as extensive as, from any visible indications, we have reason to believe it, it should still be remembered that similar attainments are possessed by many thousands of well-educated men of all countries, who look upon their knowledge with no more than ordinary complacency; and that a far, very far higher reach of erudition is within the grasp of

any general reader having access to the great libraries of Paris or the Vatican. Something more than we have mentioned is necessary to place our author upon a level with the best of the English novelists—for here his admirers would desire us to place him. Had Sir Walter Scott never existed, and "Waverley" never been written, we would not of course, award Mr. J. the merit of being the first to blend history, even successfully, with fiction. But as an indifferent imitator of the Scotch novelist in this respect, it is unnecessary to speak of the author of "Richelieu" any farther. To genius of any kind, it seems to us that he has little pretension. In the solemn tranquillity of his pages we seldom stumble across a novel emotion, and if any matter of deep interest arises in the path, we are pretty sure to find it an interest appertaining to some historical fact equally vivid or more so in the original chronicles.

CLXXVII.

Jack Birkenhead, *apud* Bishop Sprat, says that "a great wit's great work is to refuse." The apothegm must be swallowed *cum grano salis*. His greatest work is to originate no matter that shall require refusal.

CLXXVIII.

"Frequently since his recent death," says the American editor of Hood, "he has been called a great author—a phrase used not inconsiderately or in vain." Yet, if we adopt the conventional idea of "a great author," there

has lived, perhaps, no writer of the last half century who, with equal notoriety, was less entitled than Hood to be so called. In fact, he was a literary merchant, whose main stock in trade was *littleness;* for, during the larger portion of his life, he seemed to breathe only for the purpose of perpetrating puns—things of so despicable a platitude that the man who is capable of habitually committing them, is seldom found capable of any thing else. Whatever merit *may* be discovered in a pun, arises altogether from *unexpectedness.* This is the pun's element and is twofold. First, we demand that the *combination* of the pun be unexpected; and, secondly, we require the most entire unexpectedness in the pun *per se.* A rare pun, rarely appearing, is to a certain extent, a pleasurable effect; but to no mind, however debased in taste, is a continuous effort at punning otherwise than unendurable. The man who maintains that he derives gratification from any such chapters of punnage as Hood was in the daily practice of committing to paper, should not be credited upon oath.

The puns of the author of "Fair Inez," however, are to be regarded as the weak points of the man. Independently of their ill effect, in a literary view, as mere puns, they leave upon us a painful impression; for too evidently are they the hypochondriac's struggles at mirth—the grinnings of the death's head. No one can read his "Literary Reminiscences" without being convinced of his habitual despondency:—and the species of false wit in

question is precisely of that character which would be adopted by an author of Hood's temperament and cast of intellect, when compelled to write at an emergency. That his heart had no interest in these *niäiseries*, is clear. I allude, of course, to his *mere* puns for the pun's sake—a class of letters by which he obtained his widest renown. That he did *more* in this way than in any other, is but a corollary from what I have already said, for, generally, he was unhappy, and almost continually he wrote *invitâ Minerva*. But his true province was a very rare and ethereal *humor*, in which the mere pun was left out of sight, or took the character of the richest *grotesquerie;* impressing the imaginative reader with remarkable force, as if by a new phase of the ideal. It is in this species of brilliant, or, rather, *glowing* grotesquerie, uttered with a rushing *abandon* vastly heightening its effect, that Hood's marked originality mainly consisted:—and it is this which entitles him, at times, to the epithet "great":—for *that* undeniably may be considered great (of whatever seeming littleness in itself) which is capable of inducing intense emotion in the minds or hearts of those who are themselves undeniably great.

The field in which Hood is *distinctive* is a border-land between Fancy and Fantasy. In this region he reigns supreme. Nevertheless, he has made successful and frequent incursions, although vacillatingly, into the domain of the true Imagination. I mean to say that he is never truly or purely imaginative for more than a paragraph at

a time. In a word, his peculiar genius was the result of vivid *Fancy* impelled by Hypochondriasis.

CLXXIX.

There is an old German chronicle about Reynard the Fox, when crossed in love—about how he desired to turn hermit, but could find no spot in which he could be "thoroughly alone," until he came upon the desolate fortress of Malspart. He should have taken to reading the "American Drama" of "Witchcraft." I fancy he would have found himself "thoroughly alone" in that.

CLXXX.

Since it has become fashionable to trundle houses about the streets, should there not be some remodelling of the legal definition of realty, as "that which is permanent, fixed, and immovable, that cannot be carried out of its place?" According to this, a house is by no means real estate.

CLXXXI.

The enormous multiplication of books in every branch of knowledge is one of the greatest evils of this age; since it presents one of the most serious obstacles to the acquisition of correct information, by throwing in the reader's way piles of lumber, in which he must painfully grope for the scraps of useful matter peradventure interspersed.

CLXXXII.

That Professor Wilson is one of the most gifted and altogether one of the most remarkable men of his day,

few persons will be weak enough to deny. His ideality —his enthusiastic appreciation of the beautiful, conjoined with a temperament compelling him into action and expression, has been the root of his preëminent success. Much of it, undoubtedly, must be referred to that so-called moral courage which is but the consequence of the temperament in its physical elements. In a word, Professor Wilson is what he is, because he possesses ideality, energy, and audacity each in a very unusual degree. The first, almost unaided by the two latter, has enabled him to produce much impression, as a poet, upon the secondary or tertiary grades of the poetic comprehension. His "Isle of Palms" appeals effectively to all those poetic intellects in which the poetic predominates greatly over the intellectual element. It is a composition which delights through the glow of its imagination, but which repels (comparatively, of course) through the *niäiseries* of its general conduct and construction. As a critic, Professor Wilson has derived, as might easily be supposed, the greatest aid from the qualities for which we have given him credit—and it is in criticism especially that it becomes very difficult to say which of these qualities has assisted him the most. It is sheer audacity, however, to which, perhaps, after all, he is the most particularly indebted. How little he owes to intellectual preëminence, and how much to the mere overbearing impetuosity of his opinions, would be a singular subject for speculation. Nevertheless it is true, that this rash spirit of domination would have served, without his rich ideality, but to hurry

him into contempt. Be this as it may, in the first requisite of a critic the Scotch Aristarchus is grossly deficient. Of one who instructs we demand, in the first instance, a certain knowledge of the principles which regulate the instruction. Professor Wilson's capability is limited to a keen appreciation of the beautiful, and fastidious sense of the deformed. Why or how either is either, he never dreams of pretending to inquire, because he sees clearly his own inability to comprehend. He is no analyst. He is ignorant of the machinery of his own thoughts and the thoughts of other men. His criticism is emphatically on the surface—superficial. His opinions are mere *dicta*—unsupported *verba magistri*—and are just or unjust at the variable taste of the individual who reads them. He persuades—he bewilders—he overwhelms—at times he even argues—but there has been no period at which he ever *demonstrated* any thing beyond his own utter incapacity for demonstration.

CLXXXIII.

One of the most singular styles in the world—certainly one of the most loose—is that of the elder D'Israeli. For example, he thus begins his chapter on bibliomania: "The preceding article [that on libraries] is honorable to literature." Here no self-praise is intended. The writer means to say merely that the facts narrated in the preceding article are honorable, etc. Three fourths of his sentences are constructed in a similar manner. The blunders evidently arise, however, from the author's pre-occupation with his subject. His thought, or rather matter,

outruns his pen, and drives him upon condensation at the expense of luminousness. The manner of D'Israeli has many of the traits of Gibbon—although little of the latter's precision.

CLXXXIV.

Words—printed ones especially—are murderous things. Keats did (or did not) die of a criticism, Cromwell of Titus' pamphlet "Killing no Murder," and Montfleury perished of the "Andromache." The author of the "Parnasse Réformé" makes him thus speak in Hades—"*L'homme donc qui voudrait savoir ce dont je suis mort qu'il ne demande pas s'il fût de fievre ou de podagre ou d'autre chose mais qu'il entende que ce fût de l'Andromache.*" As for myself, I am fast dying of the *Sartor Resartus.*"

CLXXXV.

Captain Hall is one of the most agreeable of writers. We like him for the same reason that we like a good drawing-room conversationist—there is such a pleasure in listening to his elegant nothings. Not that the captain is unable to be profound. He has, on the contrary, some reputation for science. But in his hands even the most trifling personal adventures become interesting from the very piquancy with which they are told.

CLXXXVI.

How truthful an air of deep lamentation hangs here * upon every gentle syllable! It pervades all. It comes

* The Maiden Hunting for her Fawn, by Andrew Marvell.

over the sweet melody of the words, over the gentleness and grace which we fancy in the little maiden herself, even over the half-playful, half-petulant air with which she lingers on the beauties and good qualities of her favorite —like the cool shadow of a summer cloud over a bed of lilies and violets, and "all sweet flowers." The whole thing is redolent with poetry of the *very loftiest order*. It is positively crowded with *nature* and with *pathos*. Every line is an idea—conveying either the beauty and playfulness of the fawn, or the artlessness of the maiden, or the love of the maiden, or her admiration, or her grief, or the fragrance, and sweet warmth, and perfect *appropriateness* of the little nest-like bed of lilies and roses, which the fawn devoured as it lay upon them, and could scarcely be distinguished from them by the once happy little damsel who went to seek her pet with an arch and rosy smile upon her face. Consider the great variety of *truth* and delicate thought in the few lines we have quoted—the *wonder* of the maiden at the fleetness of her favorite —the "*little silver feet*,"—the fawn challenging his mistress to the race, "with the pretty skipping grace," running on before, and then, with head turned back, awaiting her approach only to fly from it again—can we not distinctly perceive all these things? The exceeding vigor, too, and beauty of the line,

And trod as if on the four winds,

which are vividly apparent when we regard the artless nature of the speaker, and the *four feet* of the favorite—

one for each wind. Then the garden of "*my own*," so overgrown—entangled—with lilies and roses as to be "a little wilderness"—the fawn loving to be there and there "*only*"—the maiden seeking it "where it *should* lie," and not being able to distinguish it from the flowers until "itself would rise"—the lying among the lilies "like a bank of lilies,"—the loving to "*fill*" itself with roses,

> And its pure virgin limbs to fold
> In whitest sheets of lilies cold,

and these things being its "*chief*" delights—and then the preëminent beauty and naturalness of the concluding lines—whose very outrageous hyperbole and absurdity only render them the more true to nature and to propriety, when we consider the innocence, the artlessness, the enthusiasm, the passionate grief, and more passionate admiration of the bereaved child,

> *Had it lived long it would have been*
> *Lilies without—roses within.*

CLXXXVII.

We are not among those who regard the genius of Petrarch as a subject for enthusiastic admiration. The characteristics of his poetry are not traits of the highest, or even of a high order; and in accounting for his fame, the discriminating critic will look rather to the circumstances which surrounded the man, than to the literary merits of the pertinacious sonnetteer. Grace and tenderness we grant him—but these qualities are surely insufficient to establish his poetical apotheosis.

In other respects he is entitled to high consideration. As a patriot, notwithstanding some accusations which have been rather urged than established, we can only regard him with approval. In his republican principles; in his support of Rienzi at the risk of the displeasure of the Colonna family; in his whole political conduct, in short, he seems to have been nobly and disinterestedly zealous for the welfare of his country. But Petrarch is most important when we look upon him as the bridge by which, over the dark gulf of the Middle Ages, the knowledge of the old world made its passage into the new. His influence on what is termed the revival of letters was, perhaps, greater than that of any man who ever lived; certainly far greater than that of any of his immediate contemporaries. His ardent zeal in recovering and transcribing the lost treasures of antique lore cannot be too highly appreciated. But for him, many of our most valued classics might have been numbered with Pindar's hymns and dithyrambics. He devoted days and nights to this labor of love; snatching numerous precious books from the very brink of oblivion. His judgment in these things was strikingly correct, while his erudition, for the age in which he lived, and for the opportunities he enjoyed, has always been a subject of surprise.

CLXXXVIII.

One of the most singular pieces of literary mosaic is Mr. Longfellow's "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year." The general idea and manner are from Tennyson's "Death

of the Old Year," several of the most prominent points are from the death scene of Cordelia in "Lear," and the line about the "hooded friars" is from the "Comus" of Milton. Some approach to this patchwork may be found in these lines from Tasso—

> Giace l'alta Cartago : à pena i segni
> De l'alte sui ruine il lido serba :
> Muoino le città, muoino i regni ;
> Copre i fasti e le pompe arena et herba ;
> E l'huom d'esser mortal per che si sdegni.

This is entirely made up from Lucan and Sulspicius. The former says of Troy—

> *Iam tota teguntur*
> *Pergama dumetis : etiam perire ruinæ.*

Sulspicius, in a letter to Cicero, says of Megara, Egina, and Corinth—"*Hem ! nos homunculi indignamur si quis nostrûm interiit, quorum vita brevior esse debet, cum uno loco tot oppidorum cadavera projecta jaceant.*"

CLXXXIX.

The ordinary pickpocket filches a purse, and the matter is at an end. He neither takes honor to himself, openly, on the score of the purloined purse, nor does he subject the individual robbed to the charge of pickpocketism in his own person ; by so much the less odious is he, then, than the filcher of literary property. It is impossible, we should think, to imagine a more sickening spectacle than that of the plagiarist, who walks among mankind with an erecter step, and who feels his heart beat with a prouder

impulse, on account of plaudits which he is conscious are the due of another. It is the purity, the nobility, the ethereality of just fame—it is the contrast between this ethereality and the grossness of the crime of theft, which places the sin of plagiarism in so detestable a light. We are horror-stricken to find existing in the same bosom the soul-uplifting thirst for fame, and the debasing propensity to pilfer. It is the anomaly—the discord—which so grossly offends.

CXC.

Voltaire, in his preface to "Brutus," actually *boasts* of having introduced the Roman Senate on the stage in red mantles.

CXCI.

"*Les anges*," says Madame Dudevant, a woman who intersperses many an admirable sentiment amid a chaos of the most shameless and altogether objectionable fiction—"*Les anges ne sont plus pures que le cœur d'un jeune homme qui aime en vérité.*" The angels are not more pure than the heart of a young man who loves with fervor. The hyperbole is scarcely less than true. It would be truth itself, were it averred of the love of him who is at the same time young and a poet. The boyish poet-love is indisputably that one of the human sentiments which most nearly realizes our dreams of the chastened voluptuousness of heaven.

In every allusion made by the author of "Childe Harold" to his passion for Mary Chaworth, there runs a vein

of almost spiritual tenderness and purity, strongly in contrast with the gross earthliness pervading and disfiguring his ordinary love-poems. The Dream, in which the incidents of his parting with her when about to travel, are said to be delineated, or at least paralleled, has never been excelled (certainly never excelled by him) in the blended fervor, delicacy, truthfulness, and ethereality which sublimate and adorn it. For this reason, it may well be doubted if he has written any thing so universally popular. That his attachment for this "Mary" (in whose very name there indeed seemed to exist for him an "enchantment") was earnest, and long-abiding, we have every reason to believe. There are a hundred evidences of this fact, scattered not only through his own poems and letters, but in the memoirs of his relatives, and cotemporaries in general. But that it *was* thus earnest and enduring, does not controvert, in any degree, the opinion that it was a passion (if passion it can properly be termed) of the most thoroughly romantic, shadowy, and imaginative character. It was born of the hour, and of the youthful necessity to love, while it was nurtured by the waters and the hills, and the flowers, and the stars. It had no peculiar regard to the person, or to the character, or to the reciprocating affection of Mary Chaworth. Any maiden, not immediately and positively repulsive, he would have loved, under the same circumstances of hourly and unrestricted communion, such as the engravings of the subject shadow forth. They met without restraint and without

reserve. As mere children they sported together; in boyhood and girlhood they read from the same books, sang the same songs, or roamed hand-in-hand through the grounds of the conjoining estates. The result was not merely natural or merely probable, it was as inevitable as destiny itself.

In view of a passion thus engendered, Miss Chaworth (who is represented as possessed of no little personal beauty and some accomplishments) could not have failed to serve sufficiently well as the incarnation of the ideal that haunted the fancy of the poet. It is perhaps better, nevertheless, for the mere romance of the love-passages between the two, that their intercourse was broken up in early life and never uninterruptedly resumed in after-years. Whatever of warmth, whatever of soul-passion, whatever of the truer nare and essentiality of romance was elicited during the youthful association is to be attributed altogether to the poet. If *she* felt at all, it was only while the magnetism of *his* actual presence compelled her to feel. If *she* responded at all, it was merely because the necromancy of *his* words of fire could not do otherwise than extort a response. In absence, the bard bore easily with him all the fancies which were the basis of his flame,—a flame which absence itself but served to keep in vigor,—while the less ideal but at the same time the less really substantial affection of his lady-love perished utterly and forthwith, through simple lack of the element which had fanned it into being. He to her, in brief, was

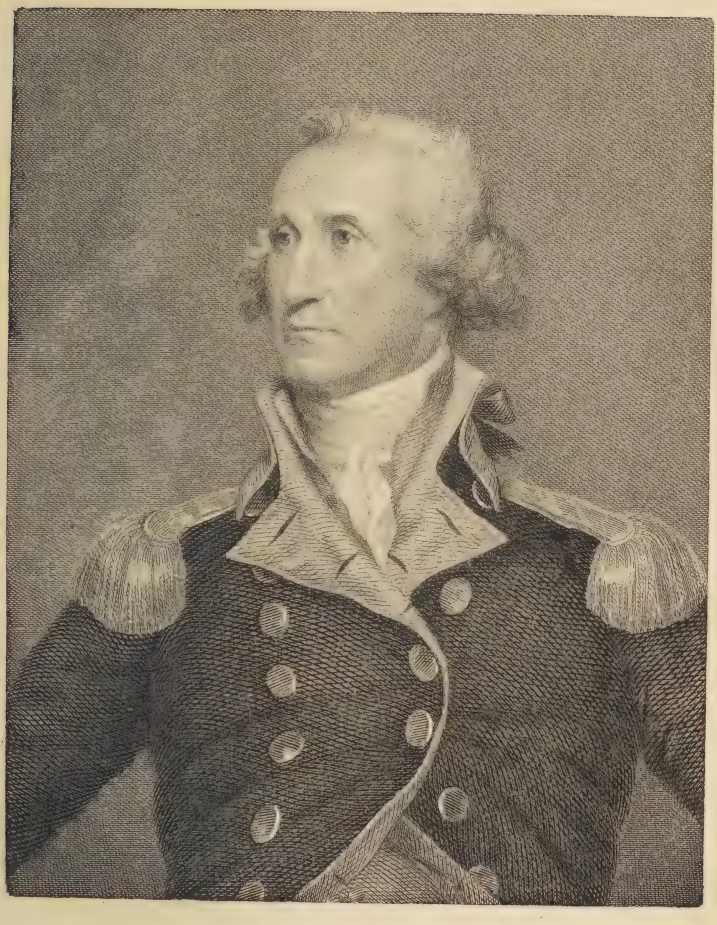
a not unhandsome, and not ignoble, but somewhat portionless, somewhat eccentric, and rather lame young man. She to him was the Egeria of his dreams—the Venus Aphrodite that sprang, in full and supernal loveliness, from the bright foam upon the storm-tormented ocean of his thoughts.

CXCII.

Mill says that he has "demonstrated" his propositions. Just in the same way Anaxagoras demonstrated snow to be black (which, perhaps, it is, if we could see the thing in the proper light), and just in the same way the French advocate, Linguet, with Hippocrates in his hand, demonstrated bread to be a slow poison. The worst of the matter is, that propositions such as these seldom *stay* demonstrated long enough to be thoroughly understood.

CXCIII.

We have read Mr. Paulding's "Life of Washington" with a degree of interest seldom excited in us by the perusal of any book whatever. We are convinced by a deliberate examination of the design, manner, and rich material of the work, that, as it grows in age, it will grow in the estimation of our countrymen, and, finally, will not fail to take a deeper hold upon the public mind, and upon the public affections, than any work upon the same subject, or of a similar nature, which has been yet written—or, possibly, which may be written hereafter. Indeed, we cannot perceive the necessity of any thing further upon the great theme of Washington. Mr. Paulding has completely



and most beautifully filled the *vacuum* which the works of Marshall and Sparks have left open. He has painted the boy, the man, the husband, and the Christian. He has introduced us to the private affections, aspirations, and charities of that hero whose affections of all affections were the most serene, whose aspirations the most God-like, and whose charities the most gentle and pure. He has taken us abroad with the patriot-farmer in his rambles about his homestead. He has seated us in his study and shown us the warrior-christian in unobtrusive communion with his God. He has done all this too, and more, in a simple and quiet manner, in a manner peculiarly his own, and which mainly because it is his own, cannot fail to be exceedingly effective. Yet it is very possible that the public may, for many years to come, overlook the rare merits of a work whose want of arrogant assumption is so little in keeping with the usages of the day, and whose striking simplicity and *naïveté* of manner give, to a cursory examination, so little evidence of the labor of composition. We have no fears, however, for the future. Such books as these before us go down to posterity like rich wines, with a certainty of being more valued as they go. They force themselves with the gradual but rapidly accumulating power of strong wedges into the hearts and understandings of a community.

In regard to the style of Mr. Paulding's "Washington," it would scarcely be doing it justice to speak of it merely as well adapted to its subject, and to its immediate design.

Perhaps a rigorous examination would detect an occasional want of euphony, and some inaccuracies of syntactical arrangement. But nothing could be more out of place than any such examination in respect to a book whose forcible, rich, vivid, and comprehensive English might advantageously be held up, as a model for the young writers of the land. There is no better literary *manner* than the manner of Mr. Paulding. Certainly no American, and possibly no living writer of England, has more of those numerous peculiarities which go to the formation of a happy style. It is questionable, we think, whether any writer of any country combines as many of these peculiarities with as much of that essential negative virtue, the absence of affectation. We repeat, as our confident opinion, that it would be difficult, even with great care and labor, to improve upon the general manner of the volumes now before us, and that they contain many long individual passages of a force and beauty not to be surpassed by the finest passages of the finest writers in any time or country. It is this striking character in the "Washington" of Mr. Paulding—striking and peculiar indeed at a season when we are so culpably inattentive to all matters of this nature, as to mistake for style the fine airs at second hand of the silliest romancers—it is this character, we say, which should insure the fulfilment of the writer's principal design, in the immediate introduction of his book into every respectable academy in the land.

CXCIV.

Scott, in his "Presbyterian Eloquence," speaks of "that ancient fable, not much known," in which a trial of skill in singing being agreed upon between the cuckoo and the nightingale, the ass was chosen umpire. When each bird had done his best, the umpire declared that the nightingale sang extremely well, but that "for a good plain song give him the cuckoo." The judge with the long ears, in this case, is a fine type of the tribe of critics who insist upon what they call "quietude" as the supreme literary excellence—gentlemen who rail at Tennyson and elevate Addison into apotheosis. By the way, the following passage from Sterne's "Letter from France," should be adopted at once as a motto by the *Down-East Review*: "As we rode along the valley, we saw a herd of asses on the top of one of the mountains. How they viewed and *reviewed* us!"

CXCV.

A hundred criticisms to the contrary notwithstanding, I must regard "The Lady of Lyons" as one of the most successful dramatic efforts of modern times. It is popular, and justly so. It could not fail to be popular so long as the people have a heart. It abounds in sentiments which stir the soul as the sound of a trumpet. It proceeds rapidly and consequentially; the interest not for one moment being permitted to flag. Its incidents are admirably conceived and skilfully wrought into execution. Its *dramatis personæ*, throughout, have the high merit of being nat-

ural, although, except in the case of Pauline, there is no marked individuality. She is a creation which would have done no dishonor to Shakespeare. She excites profound emotion. It has been sillily objected to her that she is weak, mercenary, and at points ignoble. She is; and what then? We are not dealing with Clarissa Harlowe. Bulwer has painted a woman. The chief defect of the play lies in the heroine's consenting to wed Beauseant, while aware of the existence and even the continued love of Claude. As the plot runs, there is a question in Pauline's soul between a comparatively trivial (because merely worldly) injury to her father, and utter ruin and despair inflicted upon her husband. Here there should not have been an instant's hesitation. The audience have no sympathy with any. Nothing on earth should have induced the wife to give up the living Melnotte. Only the assurance of his death could have justified her in sacrificing herself to Beauseant. As it is, we hate her for the sacrifice. The effect is repulsive—but I must be understood as calling this effect objectionable solely on the ground of its being at war with the whole genius of the play.

CXCVI.

"Contempt," says an Eastern proverb, "pierces even through the shell of the tortoise"; but the skull of a Fuller would feel itself insulted by a comparison, in point of impermeability, with the shell of a Gallipago turtle.

CXCVII.

How thoroughly comprehensive is the account of Adam, as given at the bottom of the old picture in the Vatican!—"*Adam, divinitus edoctus, primus scientiarum et literarum inventor.*"

CXCVIII.

If need were, I should have little difficulty, perhaps, in defending a certain apparent dogmatism to which I am prone, on the topic of versification.

"What is poetry?" notwithstanding Leigh Hunt's rigmarolic attempt at answering it, is a query that, with great care and deliberate agreement beforehand on the exact value of certain leading words, *may*, possibly, be settled to the partial satisfaction of a few analytical intellects, but which, in the existing condition of metaphysics, never *can* be settled to the satisfaction of the majority; for the question is purely metaphysical, and the whole science of metaphysics is at present a chaos, through the impossibility of fixing the meanings of the words which its very nature compels it to employ. But as regards versification this difficulty is only partial; for although one third of the topic may be considered metaphysical, and thus may be mooted at the fancy of this individual or of that, still the remaining two thirds belong, undeniably, to the mathematics. The questions ordinarily discussed with so much gravity in regard to rhythm, metre, etc., are susceptible of positive adjustment by demonstration. Their laws are merely a portion of the Median laws

of form and quantity—of relation. In respect, then, to any of these ordinary questions—these sillily moot points which so often arise in common criticism—the prosodist would speak as weakly in saying "this or that proposition is *probably* so and so, or *possibly* so and so," as would the mathematician in admitting that, in his humble opinion, or if he were not greatly mistaken, any two sides of a triangle were, together, greater than the third side. I must add, however, as some palliation of the discussions referred to, and of the objections so often urged with a sneer to "particular theories of versification binding no one but their inventor"—that there is really extant no such work as a Prosody *Raissonnée*. The Prosodies of the schools are merely collections of vague *laws*, with their more vague exceptions, based upon no principles whatever, but extorted in the most speculative manner from the usages of the ancients, who had *no* laws beyond those of their ears and fingers. "And these were sufficient," it will be said, "since 'The Iliad' is melodious and harmonious beyond any thing of modern times." Admit this:—but neither do we write in Greek, nor has the invention of modern times been as yet exhausted. An analysis based on the natural laws of which the bard of Scios was ignorant, would suggest multitudinous improvements to the best passages of even "The Iliad"; nor does it in any manner follow from the suppositious fact that Homer found in his ears and fingers a satisfactory system of rules (the point which I have just denied)—nor does it follow,

I say, from this, that the rules which *we* deduce from the Homeric *effects* are to supersede those immutable principles of time, quantity, etc.—the mathematics, in short, of music—which must have stood to these Homeric effects in the relation of *causes*—the *mediate* causes of which these "ears and fingers" are simply the *intermedia.*

CXCIX.

Of Berryer, somebody says "he is the man in whose description is the greatest possible consumption of antithesis." For "description" read "lectures," and the sentence would apply well to Hudson, the lecturer on Shakespeare. Antithesis is his end—he has no other. He does not employ it to enforce thought, but he gathers thought from all quarters with the sole view to its capacity for antithetical expression. His essays have thus only paragraphical effect; as wholes, they produce not the slightest impression. No man living could say what it is Mr. Hudson proposes to demonstrate; and if the question were propounded to Mr. H. himself, we can fancy how particularly embarrassed he would be for a reply. In the end, were he to answer honestly he would say—"*antithesis.*"

As for his reading, Julius Cæsar would have said of him that he sang ill, and undoubtedly he must have "gone to the dogs" for his experience in pronouncing the *r* as if his throat were bored like a rifle-barrel.*

* "*Nec illi* (*Demostheni*) *turpe videbatur vel, optimis relictis magistris, ad canes se conferre, et ab illis literæ vim et naturam petere, illorumque in so-*

CC.

It is James Montgomery who thinks proper to style McPherson's "Ossian" a collection of "halting, dancing, lumbering, grating, nondescript paragraphs."

CCI.

A book* which puzzles me beyond measure, since, while agreeing with its general conclusions (except where it discusses *provision*), I invariably find fault with the reasoning through which the conclusions are attained. I think the treatise grossly illogical throughout. For example:—the origin of the work is thus stated in an introductory chapter:

About twelve months since, I was asked by some friends to write a paper against Mesmerism—and I was furnished with materials by a highly esteemed quondam pupil, which proved incontestably, that under some circumstances the operator might be duped—that hundreds of enlightened persons might equally be deceived—and certainly went far to show that the pretended science was wholly a delusion—a system of fraud and jugglery by which the imaginations of the credulous were held in thraldom through the arts of the designing. Perhaps in an evil hour I assented to the proposition thus made—but on reflection, I found that the facts before me only led to the

nando, quod satis est, morem imitari."—Ad Meker. de vet. Pron. Ling. Græcæ.

* "Human Magnetism: Its Claim to Dispassionate Inquiry. Being an Attempt to Show the Utility of its Application for the Relief of Human Suffering." By W. Newnham, M. R. S. L., Author of the "Reciprocal Influence of Body and Mind." Wiley & Putnam.

direct proof that certain phenomena might be counterfeited; and the existence of counterfeit coin is rather a proof that there is somewhere the genuine standard gold to be imitated.

The fallacy here lies in a mere variation of what is called "begging the question." Counterfeit coin is said to prove the existence of genuine:—this, of course, is no more than the truism that there can be no counterfeit where there is no genuine—just as there can be no badness where there is no goodness—the terms being purely relative. But *because* there can be no counterfeit where there is no original, does it in any manner follow that any undemonstrated original exists? In seeing a spurious coin we know it to be such by comparison with coins *admitted* to be genuine; but were *no* coin admitted to be genuine, how should we establish the counterfeit, and what right should we have to talk of counterfeits at all? Now, in the case of Mesmerism, our author is merely *begging the admission.* In saying that the existence of counterfeit proves the existence of real Mesmerism, he demands that the real *be admitted.* Either he demands this or there is no shadow of force in his proposition—for it is clear that we can *pretend to be* that which is not. A man, for instance, may feign himself a sphynx or a griffin, but it would never do to regard as thus demonstrated the actual existence of either griffins or sphynxes. A word alone—the word "counterfeit"—has been sufficient to lead Mr. Newnham astray. People cannot be properly said to "counterfeit" prévision, etc.. but to

feign these phenomena. Dr. Newnham's argument, of course, is by no means original with *him*, although he seems to pride himself on it as if it were. Dr. More says: "That there should be so universal a fame and fear of that which never was, nor is, nor can be ever in the world, is to me the greatest miracle of all. If there had not been, at some time or other, true miracles, it had not been so easy to impose on the people by false. The alchemist would never go about to sophisticate metals, to pass them off for true gold and silver, unless that such a thing was acknowledged as true gold and silver in the world." This is precisely the same idea as that of Dr. Newnham, and belongs to that extensive class of argumentation which is *all point*—deriving its whole effect from epigrammatism. That the belief in ghosts, or in a Deity, or in a future state, or in any thing else credible or incredible—that any such belief is universal, demonstrates nothing more than that which needs no demonstration—the human unanimity—the identity of construction in the human brain—an identity of which the inevitable result must be, upon the whole, similar deductions from similar *data*. Most especially do I disagree with the author of this book in his (implied) disparagement of the work of Chauncey Hare Townshend —a work to be valued properly only in a day to come.

CCII.

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night,

As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in its flight.*

The *single* feather here is imperfectly illustrative of the omniprevalent darkness; but a more especial objection is the likening of one feather to the falling of another. Night is personified as a bird, and darkness—the feather of this bird—falls from it, how?—as another feather falls from another bird. Why, it does this *of course*. The illustration is identical—that is to say, null. It has no more force than an identical proposition in logic.

CCIII.

The question of international copyright has been overloaded with words. The right of property in a literary work is disputed merely for the sake of disputation, and no man should be at the trouble of arguing the point. Those who deny it, have made up their minds to deny every thing tending to further the law in contemplation. Nor is the question of expediency in any respect relevant. Expediency is only to be discussed where no *rights* interfere. It would no doubt be very expedient in any poor man to pick the pocket of his wealthy neighbor (as the poor are the majority, the case is precisely parallel to the copyright case); but what would the rich think if expediency were permitted to overrule their right? But even the expediency is untenable, grossly so. The immediate advantage arising to the pockets of our people, in the existing condition of things, is no doubt sufficiently

* Pröem to Longfellow's "Waif."

plain. We get more reading for less money than if the international law existed; but the remoter disadvantages are of infinitely greater weight. In brief, they are these: First, we have injury to our national literature by repressing the efforts of our men of genius; for genius, as a general rule, is poor in worldly goods and cannot write for nothing. Our genius being thus repressed, we are written *at* only by our "gentlemen of elegant leisure," and mere gentlemen of elegant leisure have been noted, time out of mind, for the insipidity of their productions. In general, too, they are obstinately conservative, and this feeling leads them into imitation of foreign, more especially of British, models. This is one main source of the imitativeness with which, as a people, we have been justly charged, although the first cause is to be found in our position as a colony. Colonies have always naturally aped the mother land. In the second place, irreparable ill is wrought by the almost exclusive dissemination among us of foreign—that is to say, of monarchical or aristocratical—sentiment in foreign books; nor is this sentiment less fatal to democracy because it reaches the people themselves directly in the gilded pill of the poem or the novel. We have next to consider the impolicy of our committing, in the national character, an open and continuous wrong on the frivolous pretext of its benefiting ourselves. The last and by far the most important consideration of all, however, is that sense of insult and injury aroused in the whole active intellect of

the world, the bitter and fatal resentment excited in the universal heart of literature—a resentment which will not and which cannot make nice distinctions between the temporary perpetrators of the wrong and that democracy in general which permits its perpetration. The autorial body is the most autocratic on the face of the earth. How, then, can those institutions even hope to be safe which systematically persist in trampling it under foot?

CCIV.

The drama, as the chief of the imitative arts, has a tendency to beget and keep alive in its votaries the imitative propensity. This might be supposed *a priori*, and experience confirms the supposition. Of all imitators, dramatists are the most perverse, the most unconscionable, or the most unconscious, and have been so time out of mind. Euripides and Sophocles were merely echoes of Æschylus, and not only was Terence Menander and nothing beyond, but of the sole Roman tragedies extant (the ten attributed to Seneca), nine are on Greek subjects. Here, then, is cause enough for the "decline of the drama," if we are to believe that the drama has declined. But it has not: on the contrary, during the last fifty years it has materially advanced. All other arts, however, have, in the same interval, advanced at a far greater rate —each very nearly in the direct ratio of its non-imitativeness—painting, for example, least of all—and the effect on the drama is, of course, that of apparent retrogradation.

CCV.

The Swedenborgians inform me that they have discovered all that I said in a magazine article, entitled "Mesmeric Revelation," to be absolutely true, although at first they were very strongly inclined to doubt my veracity—a thing which, in that particular instance, I never dreamed of not doubting myself. The story is a pure fiction from beginning to end.

CCVI.

Here is a book of "amusing travels," which is full enough of statistics to have been the joint composition of Messieurs Busching, Hassel, Cannabitch, Gaspari, Gutsmuth, and company.

CCVII.

I have never yet seen an English heroic verse on the proper model of the Greek—although there have been innumerable attempts, among which those of Coleridge are, perhaps, the most absurd, next to those of Sir Philip Sidney and Longfellow. The author of "The Vision of Rubeta" has done better, and Percival better yet; but no one has seemed to suspect that the natural preponderance of spondaic words in the Latin and Greek must, in the English, be supplied by art—that is to say, by a careful culling of the few spondaic words which the language affords—as, for example, here:—

Man is a | complex, | compound, | compost, | yet is he | God-born.

This, to all intents, is a Greek hexameter, but then its spon-

dees, are spondees, and not mere trochees. The verses of Coleridge and others are dissonant, for the simple reason that there is no equality in time between a trochee and a dactyl. When Sir Philip Sidney writes,

So to the | woods Love | runnes as | well as | rides to the | palace,

he makes an heroic verse only to the eye; for "woods Love" is the only true spondee, "runnes as," "well as," and "palace," have each the first syllable long and the second short—that is to say, they are all trochees, and occupy less time than the dactyls or spondee—hence the halting. Now, all this seems to be the simplest thing in the world, and the only wonder is how men professing to be scholars should attempt to engraft a verse, of which the spondee is an element, upon a stock which repels the spondee as antagonistical.

CCVIII.

In the sweet "Lily of Nithsdale," we read—

She 's gane to dwell in heaven, my lassie;
She 's gane to dwell in heaven:
Ye 're owre pure, quo' the voice of God,
For dwelling out o' heaven.

The *owre* and the *o'* of the two last verses should be Anglicized. The Deity at least, should be supposed to speak so as to be understood—although I am aware that a folio has been written to demonstrate broad Scotch as the language of Adam and Eve in Paradise.

CCIX.

The conclusion of the Pröem in Mr. Longfellow's late "Waif" is exceedingly beautiful. The whole poem is remarkable in this, that one of its principal excellences arises from what is, generically, a demerit. No error, for example, is more certainly fatal in poetry than defective *rhythm;* but here the *slipshodiness* is so thoroughly in unison with the nonchalant air of the thoughts—which again, are so capitally applicable to the thing done (a mere introduction of other people's fancies)—that the effect of the looseness of rhythm becomes palpable, and we see at once that here is a case in which to be *correct* would be inartistic. Here are three of the quatrains—

I see the lights of the village
  Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes over me
  That my soul cannot resist—

A feeling of sadness and longing
  That is not akin to pain,
And *resembles sorrow only*
  As the mists resemble the rain.

* * *

And the night shall be filled with music,
  And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
  And as silently steal away.

Now these lines are not to be scanned. They are referable to no true principles of rhythm. The general idea is that of a succession of anapæsts; yet not only is this idea confounded with that of dactyls, but this succession

is improperly interrupted at all points—improperly, because by unequivalent feet. The partial prosaicism thus brought about, however, (without any interference with the mere melody,) becomes a beauty solely through the nicety of its adaptation to the *tone* of the poem, and of this tone, again, to the matter in hand. In his keen sense of this adaptation, (which conveys the notion of what is vaguely termed "ease,") the reader so far loses sight of the rhythmical imperfection that he can be convinced of its existence only by treating in the same rhythm (or, rather, lack of rhythm) a subject of different tone—a subject in which decision shall take the place of nonchalance. Now, undoubtedly, I intend all this as complimentary to Mr. Longfellow; but it was for the utterance of these very opinions in the *New York Mirror* that I was accused, by some of the poet's friends, of inditing what they think proper to call "strictures" on the author of "Outre-Mer."

CCX.

We might contrive a very poetical and very suggestive, although, perhaps, no very tenable philosophy, by supposing that the virtuous live while the wicked suffer annihilation, hereafter; and that the danger of the annihilation (which danger would be in the ratio of the sin) might be indicated nightly by slumber, and occasionally, with more distinctness, by a swoon. In proportion to the dreamlessness of the sleep, for example, would be the degree of the soul's liability to annihilation. In the same way, to swoon and awake in utter unconsciousness of any lapse of

time during the syncope, would demonstrate the soul to have been then in such condition that, had death occurred, annihilation would have followed. On the other hand, when the revival is attended with remembrance of visions, (as is now and then the case, in fact,) then the soul to be considered in such condition as would insure its existence after the bodily death—the bliss or wretchedness of the existence to be indicated by the character of the visions.

CCXI.

When we attend less to "authority" and more to principles, when we look *less* at merit and *more* at demerit, (instead of the converse, as some persons suggest,) we shall then be better critics than we are. We must neglect our models and study our capabilities. The mad eulogies on what occasionally has, in letters, been well done, spring from our imperfect comprehension of what it is possible for us to do better. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon; a man who has seen neither moon nor sun, cannot be blamed for expatiating on the incomparable effulgence of the morning star." Now, it is the business of the critic so to soar that he shall *see the sun*, even although its orb be far below the ordinary horizon.

CCXII.

The United States motto, *E pluribus unum*, may possibly have a sly allusion to Pythagoras' definition of beauty—the reduction of many into one.

CCXIII.

The great feature of the "Curiosity Shop" is its chaste, vigorous, and glorious *imagination.* This is the one charm, all potent, which alone would suffice to compensate for a world more of error than Mr. Dickens ever committed. It is not only seen in the conception and general handling of the story, or in the invention of character; but it pervades every sentence of the book. We recognize its prodigious influence in every inspired word. It is this which induces the reader who is at all ideal, to pause frequently, to re-read the occasionally quaint phrases, to muse in uncontrollable delight over thoughts which, while he wonders he has never hit upon them before, he yet admits that he never has encountered. In fact it is the wand of the enchanter.

Had we room to particularize, we would mention as points evincing most distinctly the ideality of the "Curiosity Shop," the picture of the shop itself—the newly-born desire of the worldly old man for the peace of green fields—his whole character and conduct, in short—the schoolmaster, with his desolate fortunes, seeking affection in little children—the haunts of Quilp among the wharf-rats—the tinkering of the Punch-men among the tombs—the glorious scene where the man of the forge sits poring, at deep midnight, into that dread fire—again the whole conception of this character; and, last and greatest, the stealthy approach of Nell to her death—her gradual sinking away on the journey to the village, so skilfully

indicated rather than described—her pensive and prescient meditation—the fit of strange musing which came over her when the house *in which she was to die* first broke upon her sight—the description of this house, of the old church, and of the church-yard—every thing in rigid consonance with the one impression to be conveyed—that deep meaningless well—the comments of the Sexton upon death, and upon his own secure life—this whole world of mournful yet peaceful idea merging, at length, into the decease of the child Nelly, and the uncomprehending despair of the grandfather. These concluding scenes are so drawn that human language, urged by human thought, could go no farther in the excitement of human feelings. And the pathos is of that best order which is relieved, in great measure, by ideality. Here the book has never been equalled,—never approached except in one instance, and that is in the case of the "Undine" of De La Motte Fouqué. The imagination is perhaps as great in this latter work, but the pathos, although truly beautiful and deep, fails of much of its effect through the material from which it is wrought. The chief character, being endowed with purely fanciful attributes, cannot command our full sympathies, as can a simple denizen of earth. In saying, a page or so above, that the death of the child left too painful an impression, and should therefore have been avoided, we must, of course, be understood as referring to the work as a whole, and in respect to its general appreciation and popularity. The death, as recorded, is,

we repeat, of the highest order of literary excellence—yet while none can deny this fact, there are few who will be willing to read the concluding passages a second time.

Upon the whole we think the "Curiosity Shop" very much the best of the works of Mr. Dickens. It is scarcely possible to speak of it too well. It is in all respects a tale which will secure for its author the enthusiastic admiration of every man of genius.

CCXIV.

It is not every one who can put "a good thing" properly together, although, perhaps, when thus properly put together, every tenth person you meet with may be capable of both conceiving and appreciating it. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that less actual ability is required in the composition of a really good "brief article," than in a fashionable novel of the usual dimensions. The novel certainly requires what is denominated a sustained effort—but this is a matter of mere perseverance, and has but a collateral relation to talent. On the other hand —unity of effect, a quality not easily appreciated or indeed comprehended by an ordinary mind, and a *desideratum* difficult of attainment, even by those who can conceive it—is indispensable in the "brief article," and not so in the common novel. The latter, if admired at all, is admired for its detached passages, without reference to the work as a whole—or without reference to any general design—which, if it even exist in some measure, will be found to have occupied but little of the writer's atten-

tion, and cannot, from the length of the narrative, be taken in at one view, by the reader.

CCXV.

I am not sure that Tennyson is not the greatest of poets. The uncertainty attending the public conception of the term "poet" alone prevents me from demonstrating that he *is*. Other bards produce effects which are, now and then, otherwise produced than by what we call poems; but Tennyson an effect which only a poem does. His alone are idiosyncratic poems. By the enjoyment or non-enjoyment of the "Morte d' Arthur," or of the "Ænone," I would test any one's ideal sense. There are passages in his works which rivet a conviction I had long entertained, that the *indefinite* is an element in the true ποιησις. Why do some persons fatigue themselves in attempts to unravel such fantasy-pieces as the "Lady of Shalott"? As well unweave the "*ventum textilem*." If the author did not deliberately propose to himself a suggestive indefinitiveness of meaning, with the view of bringing about a definitiveness of vague and therefore of spiritual *effect*—this, at least, arose from the silent analytical promptings of that poetic genius which, in its supreme development, embodies all orders of intellectual capacity. I *know* that indefinitiveness is an element of the true music—I mean the true musical expression. Give to it any undue decision—imbue it with any determinate tone—and you deprive it, at once, of its ethereal, its ideal, its intrinsic and essential character. You dispel its luxury of

dream. You dissolve the atmosphere of the mystic upon which it floats. You exhaust it of its breath of fäery. It now becomes a tangible and easily appreciable idea—a thing of the earth, earthly. It has not, indeed, lost its power to please, but all which I consider the distinctiveness of that power. And to the uncultivated talent, or to the unimaginative apprehension, this deprivation of its most delicate nare will be, not unfrequently, a recommendation. A determinateness of expression is sought—and often by composers who should know better—is sought as a beauty rather than rejected as a blemish. Thus we have, even from high authorities, attempts at absolute *imitation* in music. Who can forget the silliness of the "Battle of Prague"? What man of taste but must laugh at the interminable drums, trumpets, blunderbusses, and thunder? "*Vocal* music," says L'Abbate Gravina, who would have said the same thing of instrumental, "ought to imitate the natural language of the human feelings and passions, rather than the warblings of canary birds, which our singers, now-a-days, affect so vastly to mimic with their quaverings and boasted cadences." This is true only so far as the "rather" is concerned. If any music must imitate any thing, it were assuredly better to limit the limitation as Gravina suggests. Tennyson's shorter pieces abound in minute rhythmical lapses sufficient to assure me that—in common with all poets living or dead—he has neglected to make precise investigation of the principles of metre; but, on the other hand, so perfect is his rhythmical in-

stinct in general, that, like the present Viscount Canterbury, he seems *to see with his ear*.

CCXVI.

There are some facts in the physical world which have a really wonderful analogy with others in the world of thought, and seem thus to give some color of truth to the (false) rhetorical dogma, that metaphor or simile may be made to strengthen an argument, as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiæ*, for example, with the amount of *momentum* proportionate with it and consequent upon it, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true, in the former, that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent impetus is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is, in the latter, that intellects of the vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more extensive in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved, and are more embarrassed and more full of hesitation in the first few steps of their progress.

CCXVII.

Thomas Moore—the most skilful literary artist of his day—perhaps of any day,—a man who stands in the singular and really wonderful predicament of being undervalued on account of the profusion with which he has scattered about him his good things. The brilliancy on any one page of "Lalla Rookh" would have sufficed to establish that

very reputation which has been in a great measure self-dimmed by the galaxied lustre of the entire book. It seems that the horrid laws of political economy cannot be evaded even by the inspired, and that a perfect versification, a vigorous style, and a never-tiring fancy, may, like the water we drink and die without, yet despise, be so plentifully set forth as to be absolutely of no value at all.

CCXVIII.

This is a queer little book,* which its author regards as "not only necessary, but urgently called for," because not only "the mass of the people are ignorant of English Grammar, but because those who profess great knowledge of it, and even those who make the teaching of it their business, will be found, upon examination, to be very far from understanding its principles."

Whether Mr. P. proceeds upon the safe old plan of *Probo meliora, deteriora sequor*—whether he is one of "the mass," and means to include himself among the ignoramuses—or whether he is only a desperate quiz—we shall not take it upon ourselves to say; but the fact is clear that, in a Preface of less than two small duodecimo pages (the leading object of which seems to be an eulogy upon one William Cobbett), he has given us some half dozen distinct instances of bad grammar.

"For these purposes," says he,—that is to say,—the pur-

* "A Grammar of the English Language, in a Series of Letters, Addressed to every American Youth." By HUGH A. PUE. Philadelphia: Published by the Author.

poses of instructing mankind and enlightening "every American youth," without exception,—"for these purposes, I have written my lessons in a series of letters. A mode that affords more opportunity for plainness, familiarity, instruction, and entertainment, than any other. A mode that was adopted by Chesterfield, in his celebrated instructions on politeness. A mode that was adopted by Smollett, in many of his novels, which, even at this day, hold a distinguished place in the world of fiction. A mode that was adopted by William Cobbett, not only in his admirable treatise on English Grammar, but in nearly every work that he wrote." "To Mr. Cobbett," adds the instructor of every American youth,—"to Mr. Cobbett I acknowledge myself *indebted* for the greater part of the grammatical knowledge which I possess." Of the fact stated there can be no question. Nobody but Cobbett could have been the grammatical Mentor of Mr. Pue, whose book (which is *all* Cobbett) speaks plainly upon the point—nothing but the ghost of William Cobbett, looking over the shoulder of Hugh A. Pue, could have inspired the latter gentleman with the bright idea of stringing together four consecutive sentences, in each of which the leading nominative noun is destitute of a verb.

Mr. Pue may attempt to justify his phraseology here, by saying that the several sentences, quoted above, commencing with the words, "A mode," are merely continuations of the one beginning "For these purposes"; but this is no justification at all. By the use of the period

he has rendered each sentence distinct, and each must be examined as such, in respect to its grammar. We are only taking the liberty of condemning Mr. P. by the words of his own mouth. Turning to page 72, where he treats of punctuation, we read as follows: "The full point is used at the end of every complete sentence; and a complete sentence is a collection of words making a complete sense, without being dependent upon another collection of words to convey the full meaning intended." Now, what kind of a meaning can we give to such a sentence as "A mode that was adopted by Chesterfield in his celebrated instructions on politeness," if we are to have "no dependence upon" the sentences that precede it? But, even in the supposition that these five sentences had been run into one, as they should have been, they would still be ungrammatical. For example: "For these purposes I have written my lessons in a series of letters—a mode that affords more opportunity for plainness, familiarity, instruction, and entertainment than any other—a mode" etc. This would have been the proper method of punctuation. "A mode" is placed in apposition with "a series of letters." But it is evident that it is *not* the "series of letters" which is the "mode." It is *the writing the lessons* in a series which is so. Yet, in order that the noun "mode" can be properly placed in apposition with what precedes it, this latter must be either a noun, or a sentence, which, taken collectively, can serve as one. Thus, in any shape, all that we have quoted is bad grammar.

We say "*bad grammar*," and say it through sheer obstinacy, because Mr. Pue says we should not. "Why, what is grammar?" asks he indignantly. "Nearly all grammarians tell us that grammar is the writing and speaking of the English language correctly. What then is bad grammar? Why bad grammar must be the bad writing and speaking of the English language correctly!!" We give the two admiration notes and all.

In the first place, if grammar be only the writing and speaking the *English* language correctly, then the French, or the Dutch, or the Kickapoos are miserable, ungrammatical races of people, and have no hopes of being any thing else, unless Mr. Pue proceeds to their assistance:—but let us say nothing of this for the present. What we wish to assert is, that the usual definition of grammar, as "the writing and speaking *correctly*," is an error which should have been long ago exploded. Grammar is the analysis of language, and this analysis will be *good* or *bad*, just as the capacity employed upon it be weak or strong—just as the grammarian be a Horne Tooke or a Hugh A. Pue. But perhaps, after all, we are treating this gentleman discourteously. His book may be merely intended as a good joke. By the by, he says, in his Preface, that "while he informs the student, he shall take particular care to *entertain* him." Now, the truth is, we have been exceedingly entertained. In such passages as the following, however, which we find upon the second page of the Introduction, we are really at a loss

to determine whether it is the *utile* or the *dulce* which prevails. We give the italics of Mr. Pue; without which, indeed, the singular force and beauty of the paragraph cannot be duly appreciated.

"The *proper* study of English grammar, so far from being *dry*, is one of the most rational enjoyments known to us; one that is highly calculated to rouse the dormant energies of the student; it requiring continual mental effort; unceasing exercise of mind. It is, in fact, the *spreading of a thought-producing plaster of paris upon the extensive grounds of intellect!* It is the parent of idea, and great causation of reflection; the mighty *instigator of insurrection in the interior;* and, above all, the unflinching *champion of internal improvement!*" We know nothing about plaster of Paris; but the analogy which subsists between ipecac. and grammar—at least between ipecac. and the grammar of Mr. Pue—never, certainly, struck us in so clear a point of view, as it does now.

But, after all, whether Mr. P.'s queer little book shall or shall not meet the views of "every American Youth" will depend pretty much upon another question of high moment—whether "every American Youth" be or be not as great a nincompoop as Mr. Pue.

CCXIX.

That Lord Brougham *was* an extraordinary man no one in his senses will deny. An intellect of unusual capacity, goaded into diseased action by passions nearly ferocious, enabled him to astonish the world, and espe-

cially the "hero-worshippers," as the author of "Sartor Resartus" has it, by the combined extent and variety of his mental triumphs. Attempting many things, it may at least be said that he egregiously failed in none. But that he pre-eminently excelled in any cannot be affirmed with truth, and might well be denied *a priori*. We have no faith in admirable Crichtons, and this merely because we *have* implicit faith in Nature and her laws. "He that is born to be a man," says Wieland, in his "Peregrinus Proteus," "neither should nor can be any thing nobler, greater, nor better than a man." The Broughams of the human intellect are never its Newtons or its Bayles. Yet the contemporaneous reputation acquired by the former is naturally greater than any which the latter may attain. The versatility of one whom we see and hear is a more dazzling and more readily appreciable merit than his profundity; which latter is best estimated in the silence of the closet, and after the quiet lapse of years. What impression Lord Brougham has stamped upon his age, cannot be accurately determined until Time has fixed and rendered definite the lines of the medal; and fifty years hence it will be difficult, perhaps to make out the deepest indentation of the *exergue*. Like Coleridge he should be regarded as one who might have done much, had he been satisfied with attempting but little.

CCXX.

The Art of Mr. Dickens, although elaborate and great, seems only a happy modification of Nature. In this re-

spect he differs remarkably from the author of "Night and Morning." The latter, by excessive care and by patient reflection, aided by much rhetorical knowledge, and general information, has arrived at the capability of producing books which might be mistaken by ninety-nine readers out of a hundred, for the genuine inspirations of genius. The former, by the promptings of the truest genius itself, has been brought to compose, and evidently without effort, works which have effected a long-sought consummation—which have rendered him the idol of the people, while defying and enchanting the critics. Mr. Bulwer, through art, has almost created a genius. Mr. Dickens, through genius, has perfected a standard from which art itself will derive its essence in rules.

CCXXI.

While Defoe would have been fairly entitled to immortality had he never written "Robinson Crusoe," yet his many other very excellent writings have nearly faded from our attention, in the superior lustre of the "Adventures of the Mariner of York." What better possible species of reputation could the author have desired for that book than the species which it has so long enjoyed? It has become a household thing in nearly every family in Christendom. Yet never was admiration of any work—universal admiration—more indiscriminately or more inappropriately bestowed. Not one person in ten—nay, not one person in five hundred, has, during the perusal of

"Robinson Crusoe," the most remote conception that any particle of genius, or even of common talent, has been employed in its creation! Men do not look upon it in the light of a literary performance. Defoe has none of their thoughts—Robinson all. The powers which have wrought the wonder have been thrown into obscurity by the very stupendousness of the wonder they have wrought! We read, and become perfect abstractions in the intensity of our interest—we close the book, and are quite satisfied that we could have written as well ourselves. All this is affected by the potent magic of verisimilitude. Indeed, the author of Crusoe must have possessed, above all other faculties, what has been termed the faculty of *identification*—that dominion exercised by volition over imagination which enables the mind to lose its own, in a fictitious individuality. This includes, in a very great degree, the power of abstraction; and with these keys we may partially unlock the mystery of that spell which has so long invested the volume before us. But a complete analysis of our interest in it cannot be thus afforded. Defoe is largely indebted to his subject. The idea of man in a state of perfect isolation, although often entertained, was never before so comprehensively carried out. Indeed, the frequency of its occurrence to the thoughts of mankind argued the extent of its influence on their sympathies, while the fact of no attempt having been made to give an embodied form to the conception, went to prove the difficulty of the undertaking. But the true narrative of Sel-

kirk in 1711, with the powerful impression it then made upon the public mind sufficed to inspire Defoe with both the necessary courage for his work, and entire confidence in its success. How wonderful has been the result!

CCXXII.

The increase, within a few years, of the magazine literature, is by no means to be regarded as indicating what some critics would suppose it to indicate—a downward tendency in American taste or in American letters. It is but a sign of the times—an indication of an era in which men are forced upon the curt, the condensed, the well-digested—in place of the voluminous—in a word, upon journalism in lieu of dissertation. We need now the light artillery rather than the peacemakers of the intellect. I will not be sure that men at present think more profoundly than half a century ago, but beyond question they think with more rapidity, with more skill, with more tact, with more of method and less of excrescence in the thought. Besides all this, they have a vast increase in the thinking material; they have more facts, more to think about. For this reason, they are disposed to put the greatest amount of thought in the smallest compass, and disperse it with the utmost attainable rapidity. Hence the journalism of the age; hence, in especial, magazines. Too many we cannot have, as a general proposition; but we demand that they have sufficient merit to render them noticeable in the beginning, and

that they continue in existence sufficiently long to permit us a fair estimation of their value.

CCXXIII.

One half the pleasure experienced at a theatre arises from the spectator's sympathy with the rest of the audience, and, especially, from his belief in their sympathy with him. The eccentric gentleman who, not long ago, at the Park, found himself the solitary occupant of box, pit, and gallery, would have derived but little enjoyment from his visit, had he been suffered to remain. It was an act of mercy to turn him out. The present absurd rage for lecturing is founded in the feeling in question. Essays which we would not be hired to read—so trite is their subject—so feeble is their execution—so much easier is it to get better information on similar themes out of any encyclopædia in Christendom—we are brought to tolerate and, alas, even to applaud in their tenth and twentieth repetition, through the whole force of our sympathy with the throng. In the same way we listen to a story with greater zest when there are others present at its narration besides ourselves. Aware of this, authors, without due reflection, have repeatedly attempted, by supposing a circle of listeners, to imbue their narratives with the interest of sympathy. At a cursory glance the idea seems plausible enough. But, in the one case, there is an actual, personal, and palpable sympathy, conveyed in looks, gestures, and brief comments—a sympathy of real individuals, all with the matters discussed, to be sure, but then

especially *each with each.* In the other instance, we alone in our closet, are required to sympathize *with* the sympathy of fictitious listeners who, so far from being present in body, are often studiously kept out of sight and out of mind for two or three hundred pages at a time. This is sympathy double-diluted—the shadow of a shade. It is unnecessary to say that the design invariably fails of its effect.

CCXXIV.

The qualities of Heber are well understood. His poetry is of a high order. He is imaginative, glowing, and vigorous, with a skill in the management of his means unsurpassed by that of any writer of his time, but without any high degree of originality. Can there be any thing in the nature of a "classical" life at war with novelty *per se?* At all events, few fine scholars, such as Heber truly was, *are* original.

CCXXV.

Original characters, so called, can only be critically praised as such, either when presenting qualities known in real life, but never before depicted (a combination nearly impossible), or when presenting qualities (moral or physical, or both) which, although unknown, or even known to be hypothetical, are so skilfully adapted to the circumstances which surround them, that our sense of fitness is not offended, and we find ourselves seeking a reason why those things *might not have been*, which we

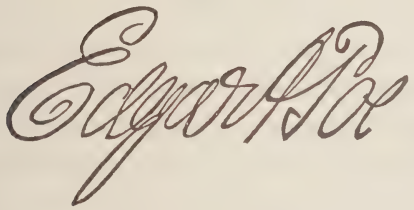
are still satisfied *are not*. The latter species of originality appertains to the loftier regions of the *Ideal*.

CCXXVI.

"George Balcombe" we are induced to regard, upon the whole, as *the best* American novel. There have been few books of its peculiar kind, we think, written in *any* country, much its superior. Its interest is intense from beginning to end. Talent of a lofty order is evinced in every page of it. Its most distinguishing features are invention, vigor, almost audacity, of thought—great variety of what the German critics term *intrigue*, and exceeding ingenuity and finish in the adaptation of its component parts. Nothing is wanting to a complete whole, and nothing is out of place, or out of time. Without being chargeable in the least degree with imitation, the novel bears a strong family resemblance to the "Caleb Williams" of Godwin. Thinking thus highly of "George Balcombe," we still do not wish to be understood as ranking it with the more brilliant fictions of some of the living novelists of Great Britain. In regard to the authorship of the book, some little conversation has occurred, and the matter is still considered a secret. But why so?—or rather, *how so?* The mind of the chief personage of the story is the transcript of a mind familiar to us—an unintentional transcript, let us grant—but still one not to be mistaken. George Balcombe thinks, speaks, and acts, as no person, we are convinced, but Judge Beverly Tucker ever precisely thought, spoke, or acted before.

A CHAPTER ON AUTOGRAPHY,

BY



UNDER this head, some years ago, there appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* an article which attracted very general attention, not less from the nature of its subject than from the peculiar manner in which it was handled. The editor introduces his readers to a certain Mr. Joseph Miller, who, it is hinted, is not merely a descendant of the illustrious Joe of jest-book notoriety, but is that identical individual in proper person. Upon this point, however, an air of uncertainty is thrown by means of an equivoque, maintained throughout the paper, in respect to Mr. Miller's middle name. This équivoque is put into the mouth of Mr. M. himself. He gives his name, in the first instance, as Joseph A. Miller, but

in the course of conversation shifts it to Joseph B., then to Joseph C., and so on through the whole alphabet, until he concludes by desiring a copy of the magazine to be sent to his address as Joseph Z. Miller, Esquire.

The object of his visit to the editor is to place in his hands the autographs of certain distinguished American *literati*. To these persons he had written rigmarole letters on various topics, and in all cases had been successful in eliciting a reply. The replies only (which it is scarcely necessary to say are all fictitious) are given in the magazine with a genuine autograph fac-simile appended, and are either burlesques of the supposed writer's usual style, or rendered otherwise absurd by reference to the nonsensical questions imagined to have been propounded by Mr. Miller. The autographs thus given are twenty-six in all—corresponding to the twenty-six variations in the initial letter of the hoaxer's middle name.

With the public this article took amazingly well, and many of our principal papers were at the expense of reprinting it with the wood-cut autographs. Even those whose names had been introduced, and whose style had been burlesqued, took the joke, generally speaking, in good part. Some of them were at a loss what to make of the matter. Dr. W. E. Channing, of Boston, was at some trouble, it is said, in calling to mind whether he had or had not actually written to some Mr. Joseph Miller the letter attributed to him in the article. This letter was nothing more than what follows :—

BOSTON, ——.

DEAR SIR—No such person as Philip Philpot has ever been in my employ as a coachman, or otherwise. The name is an odd one, and not likely to be forgotten. The man must have reference to some other Doctor Channing. It would be as well to question him closely.

Respectfully yours,

To Joseph X. Miller, Esq. W. E. CHANNING.

The precise and brief sententiousness of the divine is here, it will be seen, very truly adopted or "hit off."

In one instance only was the *jeu-d esprit* taken in serious dudgeon. Colonel Stone and the *Messenger* had not been upon the best of terms. Some one of the Colonel's little brochures had been severely treated by that journal, which declared that the work would have been far more properly published among the quack advertisements in a square corner of the *Commercial.* The Colonel had retaliated by wholesale vituperation of the *Messenger.* This being the state of affairs, it was not to be wondered at that the following epistle was not quietly received on the part of him to whom it was attributed:—

NEW YORK, ——.

DEAR SIR—I am exceedingly and excessively sorry that it is out of my power to comply with your rational and reasonable request. The subject you mention is one with which I am utterly unacquainted. Moreover, it is one about which I know very little.

Respectfully,

Joseph V. Miller, Esq. W. L. STONE.

These tautologies and anti-climaxes were too much for the Colonel, and we are ashamed to say that he committed himself by publishing in the *Commercial* an indignant denial of ever having indited such an epistle.

The principal feature of this autograph article, although perhaps the least interesting, was that of the editorial comment upon the supposed MSS., regarding them as indicative of character. In these comments the design was never more than semi-serious. At times, too, the writer was evidently led into error or injustice through the desire of being pungent—not unfrequently sacrificing truth for the sake of a *bon-mot*. In this manner qualities were often attributed to individuals, which were not so much indicated by their handwriting, as suggested by the spleen of the commentator. But that a strong analogy *does* generally and naturally exist between every man's chirography and character, will be denied by none but the unreflecting. It is not our purpose, however, to enter into the *philosophy* of this subject, either in this portion of the present paper, or in the abstract. What we may have to say will be introduced elsewhere, and in connection with particular MSS. The practical application of the theory will thus go hand in hand with the theory itself.

Our design is threefold:—In the first place, seriously to illustrate our position that the mental features are indicated (with certain exceptions) by the handwriting; secondly, to indulge in a little literary gossip; and thirdly, to furnish our readers with a more accurate and at the

same time a more general collection of the autographs of our *literati* than is to be found elsewhere. Of the first portion of this design we have already spoken. The second speaks for itself. Of the third it is only necessary to say that we are confident of its interest for all lovers of literature. Next to the person of a distinguished man-of-letters, we desire to see his portrait—next to his portrait, his autograph. In the latter, especially, there is something which seems to bring him before us in his true idiosyncrasy—in his character of *scribe*. The feeling which prompts to the collection of autographs is a natural and rational one. But complete, or even extensive collections, are beyond the reach of those who themselves do not dabble in the waters of literature. The writer of this article has had opportunities in this way enjoyed by few. The MSS. now lying before him are a motley mass indeed. Here are letters, or other compositions, from every individual in America who has the slightest pretensions to literary celebrity. From these we propose to select the most eminent names—as to give *all* would be a work of supererogation. Unquestionably, among those whose claims we are forced to postpone, are several whose high *merit* might justly demand a different treatment; but the rule applicable in a case like this seems to be that of celebrity rather than that of true worth. It will be understood that, in the necessity of selection which circumstances impose upon us, we confine ourselves *to the most noted among the living literati of the*

country. The article above alluded to embraced, as we have already stated, only twenty-six names, and was not occupied *exclusively* either with living persons, or, properly speaking, with literary ones. In fact, the whole paper seemed to acknowledge no law beyond that of whim. Our present essay will be found to include *one hundred autographs*. We have thought it unnecessary to preserve any particular order in their arrangement.

Professor CHARLES ANTHON, of Columbia College, New York, is well known as the most erudite of our classical scholars; and, although still a young man, there are few, if any, even in Europe, who surpass him in his peculiar path of knowledge. In England his supremacy has been tacitly acknowledged by the immediate republication of his editions of Cæsar, Sallust, and Cicero, with other works, and their adoption as text-books at Oxford and Cambridge. His amplification of Lemprière did him high honor, but of late has been entirely superseded by a Classical Dictionary of his own—a work most remarkable for the extent and comprehensiveness of its details, as well as for its historical, chronological, mythological, and philological *accuracy*. It has at once completely overshadowed every thing of its kind. It follows, as a matter of course, that Mr. Anthon has many little enemies among the inditers of merely big books. He has not been unassailed,

yet has assuredly remained uninjured in the estimation of all those whose opinion he would be likely to value. We do not mean to say that he is altogether without faults, but a certain antique Johnsonism of style is perhaps one of his worst. He was mainly instrumental (with Professor Henry and Dr. Hawks) in setting on foot the *New York Review*, a journal of which he is the most efficient literary support, and whose most erudite papers have always been furnished by his pen.

The chirography of Professor Anthon is the most regularly beautiful of any in our collection. We see the most scrupulous precision, finish, and neatness about every portion of it—in the formation of individual letters, as well as in the *tout-ensemble*. The perfect symmetry of the MS. gives it, to a casual glance, the appearance of Italic print. The lines are quite straight, and at exactly equal distances, yet are written without black rules, or other artificial aid. There is not the slightest superfluity in the way of flourish or otherwise, with the exception of the twirl in the C of the signature. Yet the whole is rather neat and graceful than forcible. Of four letters now lying before us, one is written on pink, one on a faint blue, one on green, and one on yellow paper—all of the finest quality. The seal is of green wax, with an impression of the head of Cæsar.

It is in the chirography of such men as Professor Anthon that we look with certainty for indication of character. The life of a scholar is mostly undisturbed by

those adventitious events which distort the natural disposition of the man of the world, preventing his real nature from manifesting itself in his MS. The lawyer, who, pressed for time, is often forced to embody a world of heterogeneous memoranda on scraps of paper, with the stumps of all varieties of pen, will soon find the fair characters of his boyhood degenerate into hieroglyphics which would puzzle Dr. Wallis or Champollion; and from chirography so disturbed it is nearly impossible to decide any thing. In a similar manner men who pass through many striking vicissitudes of life, acquire in each change of circumstance a temporary inflection of the handwriting; the whole resulting, after many years, in unformed or variable MS. scarcely to be recognized by themselves from one day to the other. In the case of literary men generally, we may expect some decisive token of the mental influence upon the MS., and in the instance of the classical devotee we may look with *especial* certainty for such token. We see, accordingly, in Professor Anthon's autography each and all the known idiosyncrasies of his taste and intellect. We recognize at once the scrupulous precision and finish of his scholarship and of his style—the love of elegance which prompts him to surround himself in his private study with gems of sculptural art and beautifully bound volumes, all arranged with elaborate attention to form, and in the very pedantry of neatness. We perceive, too, the disdain of superfluous embellishment which distinguishes his compilations, and which

gives to their exterior appearance so marked an air of Quakerism. We must not forget to observe that the "want of force" is a want as perceptible in the whole character of the man as in that of the MS.

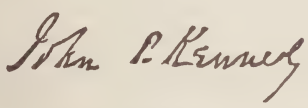
The MS. of Mr. IRVING has little about it indicative of his genius. Certainly, no one could suspect from it any nice *finish* in the writer's compositions; nor is this nice finish to be found. The letters now before us vary remarkably in appearance; and those of late date are not nearly so well written as the more antique. Mr. Irving has travelled much, has seen many vicissitudes, and has been so thoroughly satiated with fame as to grow slovenly in the performance of his literary tasks. This slovenliness has affected his handwriting. But even from his earlier MSS. there is little to be gleaned, except the ideas of simplicity and precision. It must be admitted, however, that this fact, in itself, is characteristic of the literary manner, which, however excellent, has no prominent or very remarkable features.

For the last six or seven years few men have occupied a more desirable position among us than Mr. BENJAMIN. As

the editor of the *American Monthly Magazine*, of the *New Yorker*, and more lately of the *Signal*, and *New World*, he has exerted an influence scarcely second to that of any editor in the country. This influence Mr. B. owes to no single cause, but to his combined ability, activity, causticity, fearlessness, and independence. We use the latter term, however, with some mental reservation. The editor of the *World* is independent so far as the word implies unshaken resolution to follow the bent of one's own will, let the consequences be what they may. He is no respecter of persons, and his vituperation as often assails the powerful as the powerless—indeed, the latter fall rarely under his censure. But we cannot call his independence at all times that of principle. We can never be sure that he will defend a cause merely because it is the cause of truth—or even because he regards it as such. He is too frequently biassed by personal feelings—feelings now of friendship, now of vindictiveness. He is a warm friend, and a bitter, but not implacable enemy. His judgment in literary matters should not be questioned, but there is some difficulty in getting at his real opinion. As a prose writer, his style is lucid, terse, and pungent. He is often witty, often cuttingly sarcastic, but seldom humorous. He frequently injures the force of his fiercest attacks by an indulgence in merely vituperative epithets. As a poet, he is entitled to far higher consideration than that in which he is ordinarily held. He is skilful and passionate, as well as imaginative. His sonnets have not been

surpassed. In short, it is as a poet that his better genius is evinced—it is in poetry that his noble spirit breaks forth, showing what the man is, and what, but for unhappy circumstances, he would invariably appear.

Mr. Benjamin's MS. is not very dissimilar to Mr. Irving's, and, like his, it has no doubt been greatly modified by the excitements of life, and by the necessity of writing much and hastily, so that we can predicate but little respecting it. It speaks of his exquisite sensibility and passion. These betray themselves in the nervous variation of the MS. as the subject is diversified. When the theme is an ordinary one, the writing is legible and has force; but when it verges upon any thing which may be supposed to excite, we see the characters falter as they proceed. In the MSS. of some of his best poems this peculiarity is very remarkable. The signature conveys the idea of his *usual* chirography.



Mr. KENNEDY is well known as the author of "Swallow Barn," "Horse-Shoe Robinson," and "Rob of the Bowl," three works whose features are strongly and decidedly marked. These features are boldness and force of thought (disdaining ordinary embellishment, and depending for its effect upon masses rather than upon details), with a predominant *sense of the picturesque* pervad-

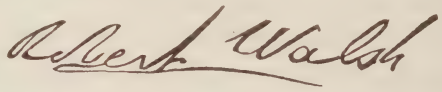
ing and giving color to the whole. His "Swallow Barn" in especial (and it is by the first effort of an author that we form the truest idea of his mental bias) is but a rich succession of picturesque still-life pieces. Mr. Kennedy is well-to-do in the world, and has always taken the world easily. We may therefore expect to find in his chirography, if ever in any, a full indication of the chief features of his literary style, especially as this chief feature is so remarkably prominent. A glance at his signature will convince any one that the indication *is* to be found. A painter called upon to designate the main peculiarity of this MS. would speak at once of the *picturesque*. This character is given it by the absence of hair-strokes, and by the abrupt termination of every letter without tapering; also in great measure by varying the size and slope of the letters. Great uniformity is preserved in the whole air of the MS., with great variety in the constituent parts. Every character has the clearness, boldness, and precision of a wood-cut. The long letters do not rise or fall in an undue degree above the others. Upon the whole, this is a hand which pleases us much, although its *bizarrerie* is rather too piquant for the general taste. Should its writer devote himself more exclusively to light letters we predict his future eminence. The paper on which our epistles are written is very fine, clear, and *white*, with gilt edges. The seal is neat, and just sufficient wax has been used for the impression. All this betokens a love of the elegant without effeminacy.

The handwriting of GRENVILLE MELLEN is somewhat peculiar, and partakes largely of the character of his signature as seen above. The whole is highly indicative of the poet's flighty, hyper-fanciful character, with his unsettled and often erroneous ideas of the beautiful. His straining after effect is well paralleled in the formation of the preposterous G in the signature, with the two dots by its side. Mr. Mellen has genius unquestionably, but there is something in his temperament which obscures it.

No correct notion of Mr. PAULDING'S literary peculiarities can be obtained from an inspection of his MS., which no doubt has been strongly modified by adventitious circumstances. His small *a's*, *t's*, and *c's* are all alike, and the style of the characters generally is French, although the entire MS. has much the appearance of Greek text. The paper which he ordinarily uses is of a very fine glossy texture, and of a blue tint, with gilt edges. His signature is a good specimen of his general hand.

Mrs. SIGOURNEY seems to take much pains with her MSS. Apparently she employs *black lines*. Every *t* is

crossed, and every *i* dotted, with precision, while the punctuation is faultless. Yet the whole has nothing of effeminacy or formality. The individual characters are large, well and freely formed, and preserve a perfect uniformity throughout. Something in her handwriting puts us in mind of Mr. Paulding's. In both MSS. perfect regularity exists, and in both the style is *formed* or *decided*. Both are beautiful, yet Mrs. Sigourney's is the most legible, and Mr. Paulding's nearly the most illegible, in the world. From that of Mrs. S. we might easily form a true estimate of her compositions. Freedom, dignity, precision, and grace, without originality, may be properly attributed to her. She has fine taste, without genius. Her paper is usually good, the seal small, of green and gold wax, and without impression.



Mr. WALSH'S MS. is peculiar, from its large, sprawling, and irregular appearance—rather rotund than angular. It always seems to have been hurriedly written. The *t's* are crossed with a sweeping scratch of the pen, which gives to his epistles a somewhat droll appearance. A *dictatorial* air pervades the whole. His paper is of ordinary quality. His seal is commonly of brown wax mingled with gold, and bears a Latin motto, of which only the words *trans* and *mortuus* are legible.

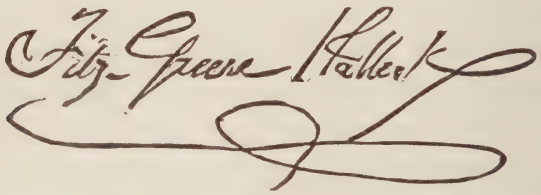
Mr. Walsh cannot be denied talent, but his reputation,

which has been bolstered into being by a *clique*, is not a thing to live. A blustering self-conceit betrays itself in his chirography, which upon the whole is not very dissimilar to that of Mr. E. Everett, of whom we will speak hereafter.

Mr. INGRAHAM, or Ingrahame (for he writes his name sometimes with and sometimes without the *e*), is one of our most *popular* novelists, if not one of our best. He appeals always to the taste of the ultra-romanticists (as a matter, we believe, rather of pecuniary policy than of choice), and thus is obnoxious to the charge of a certain cut-and-thrust, blue-fire melodramaticism. Still, he is capable of better things. His chirography is very unequal, at times sufficiently clear and flowing, at others shockingly scratchy and uncouth. From it nothing whatever can be predicated except an uneasy vacillation of temper and of purpose.

Mr. BRYANT'S MS. puts us entirely at fault. It is one of the most commonplace clerk's hands which we ever encountered, and has no character about it beyond that of the day-book and ledger. He writes, in short, what

mercantile men and professional penmen call a fair hand, but what artists would term an abominable one. Among its regular up and down strokes, waving lines and hair-lines, systematic taperings and flourishes, we look in vain for the force, polish, and decision of the poet. The *picturesque*, to be sure, is equally deficient in his chirography and in his poetical productions.



Mr. HALLECK'S hand is strikingly indicative of his genius. We see in it some force, more grace, and little of the picturesque. There is a great deal of freedom about it, and his MSS. seem to be written *currente calamo*, but without hurry. His flourishes, which are not many, look as if thoughtfully planned, and deliberately yet firmly executed. His paper is very good, and of a bluish tint; his seal of red wax.

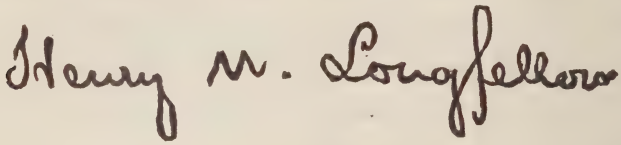
Mr. WILLIS when writing carefully would write a hand nearly resembling that of Mr. Halleck, although no similarity is perceptible in the signatures. His usual chirography is dashing, free, and not ungraceful, but is sadly deficient in force and picturesqueness. It has been the

fate of this gentleman to be alternately condemned *ad infinitum*, and lauded *ad nauseam*, a fact which speaks much in his praise. We know of no American writer who has evinced greater versatility of talent, that is to say, of high talent, often amounting to genius, and we know of none who has more narrowly missed placing himself at the head of our letters.

The paper of Mr. Willis' epistles is always fine and glossy. At present he employs a somewhat large seal, with a dove or carrier-pigeon at the top, the word "Glenmary" at the bottom, and the initials "N. P. W." in the middle.

Mr. DAWES has been long known as a poet, but his claims are scarcely yet settled, his friends giving him rank with Bryant and Halleck, while his opponents treat his pretensions with contempt. The truth is that the author of "Geraldine" and "Athenia of Damascus" has written occasional verses very well—so well that some of his minor pieces may be considered equal to any of the minor pieces of either of the two gentlemen above mentioned. His longer poems, however, will not bear examination. "Athenia of Damascus" is pompous nonsense, and "Geraldine" a most ridiculous imitation of "Don Juan," in which the beauties of the original have been as sedulously avoided as the blemishes have been blunderingly culled. In style he is perhaps the most inflated, involved, and

falsely figurative of any of our more noted poets. This defect of course is only fully appreciable in what are termed his "sustained efforts," and thus his shorter pieces are often exceedingly good. His apparent erudition is mere verbiage, and were it real would be lamentably out of place where we see it. He seems to have been infected with a blind admiration of Coleridge, especially of his mysticism and cant.



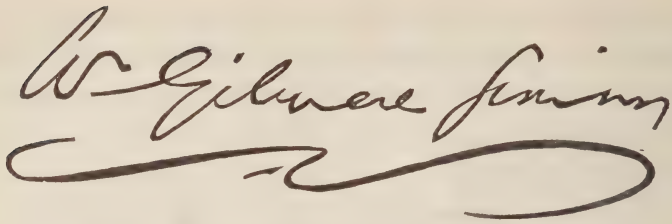
H. W. LONGFELLOW (Professor of Moral Philosophy at Harvard) is entitled to the first place among the poets of America—certainly to the first place among those who have put themselves prominently forth as poets. His good qualities are all of the highest order, while his sins are chiefly those of affectation and imitation—an imitation sometimes verging upon downright theft.

His MS. is remarkably good, and is fairly exemplified in the signature. We see here plain indications of the force, vigor, and glowing richness of his literary style; the deliberate and steady *finish* of his compositions. The man who writes thus may not accomplish much, but what he does will always be thoroughly done. The main beauty, or at least one great beauty of his poetry, is that of *proportion;* another is a freedom from extraneous embellishment. He oftener runs into affectation through

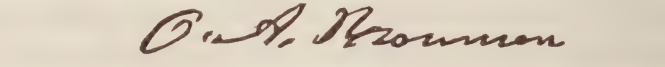
his endeavors at simplicity, than through any other cause. Now this rigid simplicity and proportion are easily perceptible in the MS. which, altogether, is a very excellent one.

The Rev. J. PIERPONT, who, of late, has attracted so much of the public attention, is one of the most accomplished poets in America. His "Airs of Palestine" is distinguished by the sweetness and vigor of its versification, and by the grace of its sentiments. Some of its shorter pieces are exceedingly terse and forcible, and none of our readers can have forgotten his "Lines on Napoleon." His rhythm is at least equal in strength and modulation to that of any poet in America. Here he resembles Milman and Croly.

His chirography, nevertheless, indicates nothing beyond the commonplace. It is an ordinary clerk's hand—one which is met with more frequently than any other. It is decidedly *formed;* and we have no doubt that he *never* writes otherwise than thus. The MS. of his school-days has probably been persisted in to the last. If so, the fact is in full consonance with the steady precision of his style. The flourish at the end of the signature is but a part of the writer's general enthusiasm.



Mr. SIMMS is the author of "Martin Faber," "Atalantis," "Guy Rivers," "The Partisan," "Mellichampe," "The Yemassee," "The Damsel of Darien," "The Black Riders of the Congaree," and one or two other productions, among which we must not forget to mention several fine poems. As a poet, indeed, we like him far better than as a novelist. His qualities in this latter respect *resemble* those of Mr. Kennedy, although he equals him in no particular, except in his appreciation of the graceful. In his sense of beauty he is Mr. K.'s superior, but falls behind him in force, and the other attributes of the author of "Swallow Barn." These differences and resemblances are well shown in the MSS. That of Mr. S. has more slope, and more uniformity in detail, with less in the mass—while it has also less of the picturesque, although still much. The middle name is Gilmore; in the cut it looks like Gilmere.

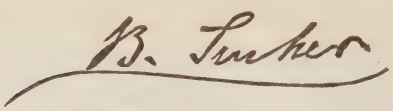


The Rev. ORESTES A. BROWNSON is chiefly known to the literary world as the editor of the *Boston Quarterly Review*, a work to which he contributes, each quarter, at

least two thirds of the matter. He has published little in book-form—his principal works being "Charles Elwood" and "New Views." Of these, the former production is, in many respects, one of the highest merit. In logical accuracy, in comprehensiveness of thought, and in the evident frankness and desire for truth in which it is composed, we know of few theological treatises which can be compared with it. Its conclusion, however, bears about it a species of hesitation and inconsequence which betray the fact that the writer has not altogether succeeded in convincing himself of those important truths which he is so anxious to impress upon his readers. We must bear in mind, however, that this is the fault of Mr. Brownson's subject, and not of Mr. Brownson. However well a man may reason on the great topics of God and immortality, he will be forced to admit tacitly in the end, that God and immortality are things to be felt, rather than demonstrated.

On subjects less indefinite, Mr. B. reasons with the calm and convincing force of a Combe. He is, in every respect, an extraordinary man, and with the more extensive resources which would have been afforded him by early education, could not have failed to bring about important results.

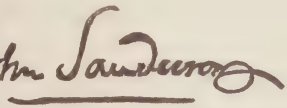
His MS. indicates, in the most striking manner, the unpretending simplicity, directness, and especially the *indefatigability*, of his mental character. His signature is more *petite* than his general chirography.



Judge BEVERLY TUCKER, of the College of William and Mary, Virginia, is the author of one of the best novels ever published in America—"George Balcombe," —although for some reason the book was never a popular favorite. It was, perhaps, somewhat too didactic for the general taste.

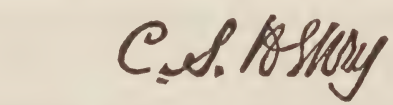
He has written a great deal also for the *Southern Literary Messenger* at different times; and at one period acted in part, if not altogether, as editor of that magazine, which is indebted to him for some very racy articles, in the way of criticism especially. He is apt, however, to be led away by personal feelings, and is more given to vituperation for the mere sake of *point* or pungency than is altogether consonant with his character as judge. Some five years ago there appeared in the *Messenger*, under the editorial head, an article on the subject of the "Pickwick Papers" and some other productions of Mr. Dickens. This article, which abounded in well-written but extravagant denunciation of every thing composed by the author of "The Curiosity Shop," and which prophesied his immediate downfall, we have reason to believe was from the pen of Judge Beverly Tucker. We take this opportunity of mentioning the subject, because the odium of the paper in question fell altogether upon our shoulders, and it is a burden we are

not disposed and never intended to bear. The review appeared in March, we think, and we had retired from the *Messenger* in the January preceding. About eighteen months previously, and when Mr. Dickens was scarcely known to the public at all, except as the author of some brief tales and essays, the writer of this article took occasion to predict in the *Messenger*, and in the most emphatic manner, that high and just distinction which the author in question has attained. Judge Tucker's MS. is diminutive, but neat and legible, and has much force and precision, with little of the picturesque. The care which he bestows upon his literary compositions makes itself manifest also in his chirography. The signature is more florid than the general hand.

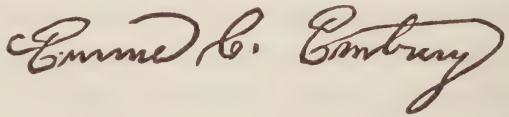


Mr. SANDERSON, Professor of the Greek and Latin Languages in the High School of Philadelphia, is well known as the author of a series of letters entitled "The American in Paris." These are distinguished by ease and vivacity of style, with occasional profundity of observation, and, above all, by the frequency of their illustrative anecdotes and figures. In all these particulars Professor Sanderson is the precise counterpart of Judge Beverly Tucker, author of "George Balcombe." The MSS. of the two gentlemen are nearly identical. Both are neat, clear, and legible. Mr. Sanderson's is somewhat the more crowded.

About Miss GOULD'S MS. there are great neatness, picturesqueness, and finish, without over-effeminacy. The literary style of one who writes thus will always be remarkable for sententiousness and epigrammatism; and these are the leading features of Miss Gould's poetry.



Prof. HENRY, of Bristol College, is chiefly known by his contributions to our Quarterlies, and as one of the originators of the *New York Review*, in conjunction with Dr. Hawks and Professor Anthon. His chirography is now neat and picturesque (much resembling that of Judge Tucker), and now excessively scratchy, *clerky*, and slovenly—so that it is nearly impossible to say any thing respecting it, except that it indicates a vacillating disposition, with unsettled ideas of the beautiful. None of his epistles, in regard to their chirography, end as well as they begin. This trait denotes *fatigability*. His signature, which is bold and decided, conveys not the faintest idea of the general MS.



Mrs. EMBURY is chiefly known by her contributions to the periodicals of the country. She is one of the most

nervous of our female writers, and is not destitute of originality—that rarest of all qualities in a woman, and especially in an American woman.

Her MS. evinces a strong disposition to fly off at a tangent from the old formulæ of the Boarding Academies. But in it, and in her literary style, it would be well that she should no longer hesitate to discard the absurdities of mere fashion.

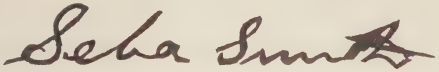
Miss LESLIE is celebrated for the homely naturalness of her stories and for the broad satire of her comic style. She has written much for the magazines. Her chirography is distinguished for neatness and finish, without over-effeminacy. It is rotund, and somewhat diminutive; the letters being separate, and the words always finished with an inward twirl. She is never particular about the quality of her paper or the other externals of epistolary correspondence. From her MSS. in general, we might suppose her solicitous rather about the effect of her compositions as a whole, than about the polishing of the constituent parts. There is much of the picturesque both in her chirography and in her literary style.

Mr. NEAL has acquired a very extensive reputation through his "Charcoal Sketches," a series of papers

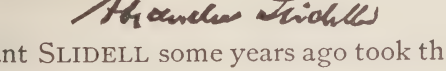
originally written for the *Saturday News* of this city, and afterward published in book form, with illustrations by Johnston. The whole design of the "Charcoal Sketches" may be stated as the depicting of the wharf and street *loafer;* but this design has been executed altogether in caricature. The extreme of burlesque runs throughout the work, which is also chargeable with a tedious repetition of slang and incident. The loafer always declaims the same nonsense in the same style, gets drunk in the same way, and is taken to the watch-house after the same fashion. Reading one chapter of the book we read all. Any single description would have been an original idea well executed, but the dose is repeated *ad nauseam*, and betrays a woful poverty of invention. The manner in which Mr. Neal's book was belauded by his personal friends of the Philadelphia press speaks little for their independence, or less for their taste. To dub the author of these "Charcoal Sketches" (which are really very excellent police reports) with the title of "the American Boz," is either outrageous nonsense or malevolent irony.

In other respects, Mr. N. has evinced talents which cannot be questioned. He has conducted the *Pennsylvanian* with credit, and, as a political writer, he stands deservedly high. His MS. is simple and legible, with much space between the words. It has force, but little grace. Altogether, his chirography is good; but as he belongs to the editorial corps, it would not be just to suppose that any deductions in respect to character could

be gleaned from it. His signature conveys the general MS. with accuracy.



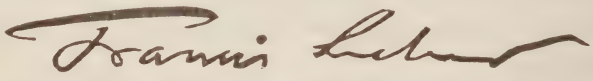
Mr. SEBA SMITH has become somewhat widely celebrated as the author, in part, of the "Letters of Major Jack Downing." These were very clever productions; coarse, but full of fun, wit, sarcasm, and sense. Their manner rendered them exceedingly popular, until their success tempted into the field a host of brainless imitators. Mr. S. is also the author of several poems; among others, of "Powhatan, a Metrical Romance," which we do not very particularly admire. His MS. is legible, and has much simplicity about it. At times it vacillates, and appears unformed. Upon the whole, it is much such a MS. as David Crockett wrote, and precisely such a one as we might imagine would be written by a *veritable* Jack Downing—by Jack Downing himself, had this creature of Mr. Smith's fancy been endowed with a real entity. The fact is that "The Major" is not *all* a creation; at least one half of his character actually exists in the bosom of his originator. It was the Jack Downing half that composed "Powhatan."



Lieutenant SLIDELL some years ago took the additional name of Mackenzie. His reputation at one period was extravagantly high—a circumstance owing, in some meas-

ure, to the *esprit de corps* of the navy, of which he is a member, and to his private influence, through his family, with the review cliques. Yet his fame was not altogether undeserved; although it cannot be denied that his first book, "A Year in Spain," was in some danger of being overlooked by his countrymen, until a benignant star directed the attention of the London bookseller, Murray, to its merits. Cockney octavos prevailed; and the clever young writer, who was cut dead in his Yankee habiliments, met with bows innumerable in the gala dress of an English *imprimatur*. The work now ran through several editions, and prepared the public for the kind reception of "The American in England," which exalted his reputation to its highest pinnacle. Both these books abound in racy descriptions, but are chiefly remarkable for their gross deficiencies in grammatical construction.

Lieutenant Slidell's MS. is peculiarly neat and even—quite legible, but altogether too *petite* and effeminate. Few tokens of his literary character are to be found beyond the *petiteness*, which is exactly analogous with the minute detail of his descriptions.

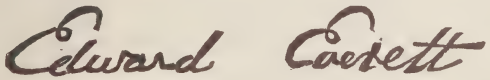


FRANCIS LIEBER is Professor of History and Political Economy in the College of South Carolina, and has published many works distinguished by acumen and erudition. Among these we may notice a "Journal of a Residence in Greece," written at the instigation of the

historian Niebuhr; "The Stranger in America," a piquant book abounding in various information relative to the United States; a treatise on "Education"; "Reminiscences of an Intercourse with Niebuhr"; and an "Essay on International Copyright,"—this last a valuable work.

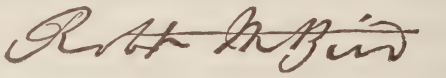
Professor Lieber's personal character is that of the frankest and most unpretending *bonhommie*, while his erudition is rather massive than minute. We may therefore expect his MS. to differ widely from that of his brother scholar, Professor Anthon; and so in truth it does. His chirography is careless, heavy, black, and forcible, without the slightest attempt at ornament—very similar, upon the whole, to the well-known chirography of Chief-Justice Marshall. His letters have the peculiarity of a wide margin left at the top of each page.

Mrs. HALE is well known for her masculine style of thought. This is clearly expressed in her chirography, which is far larger, heavier, and altogether bolder than that of her sex generally. It resembles in a great degree that of Professor Lieber, and is not easily deciphered.



Mr. EVERETT'S MS. is a noble one. It has about it an air of deliberate precision emblematic of the statesman,

and a mingled grace and solidity betokening the scholar. Nothing can be more legible, and nothing need be more uniform. The man who writes thus will never grossly err in judgment or otherwise; but we may also venture to say that he will never attain the loftiest pinnacle of renown. The letters before us have a seal of red wax, with an oval device bearing the initials E. E. and surrounded with a scroll, inscribed with some Latin words which are illegible.

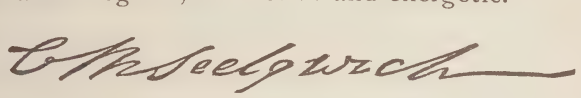


Dr. BIRD is well known as the author of "The Gladiator," "Calavar," "The Infidel," "Nick of the Woods," and some other works,—"Calavar" being, we think, by far the best of them, and beyond doubt one of the best of American novels.

His chirography resembles that of Mr. Benjamin very closely, the chief difference being in a curl of the final letters in Dr. B.'s. The characters, too, have the air of not being able to keep pace with the thought, and an uneasy want of finish seems to have been the consequence. A vivid imagination might easily be deduced from such a MS.

Mr. JOHN NEAL'S MS. is exceedingly illegible and care-

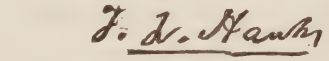
iess. Many of his epistles are perfect enigmas, and we doubt whether he could read them himself in half-an-hour after they are penned. Sometimes four or five words are run together. Any one, from Mr. Neal's penmanship, might suppose his mind to be what it really is—excessively flighty and irregular, but active and energetic.



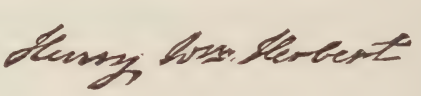
The penmanship of Miss SEDGWICK is excellent. The characters are well-sized, distinct, elegantly but not ostentatiously formed, and, with perfect freedom of manner, are still sufficiently feminine. The hair-strokes differ little from the downward ones, and the MSS. have thus a uniformity they might not otherwise have. The paper she generally uses is good, blue, and machine-ruled. Miss Sedgwick's handwriting points unequivocally to the traits of her literary style—which are strong common-sense and a masculine disdain of mere ornament. The signature conveys the general chirography.

Mr. COOPER'S MS. is very bad—*unformed*, with little of distinctive character about it, and varying greatly in different epistles. In most of those before us a steel pen has been employed, the lines are crooked, and the whole chirography has a constrained and school-boyish air. The paper is fine, and of a bluish tint. A wafer is always used.

Without appearing ill-natured, we could scarcely draw any inferences from such a MS. Mr. Cooper has seen many vicissitudes, and it is probable that he has not always written thus. Whatever are his faults, his genius cannot be doubted.

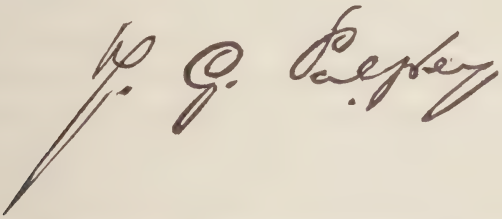


Dr. HAWKS is one of the originators of the *New York Review*, to which journal he has furnished many articles. He is also known as the author of the "History of the Episcopal Church of Virginia," and one or two minor works. He now edits the *Church Record*. His style, both as a writer and as a preacher, is characterized rather by a perfect *fluency* than by any more lofty quality, and this trait is strikingly indicated in his chirography, of which the signature is a fair specimen.



This gentleman is the author of "Cromwell," "The Brothers," "Ringwood, the Rover," and some other minor productions. He at one time edited the *American Monthly Magazine* in connection with Mr. Hoffman. In his compositions for the magazines, Mr. HERBERT is in the habit of doing both them and himself gross injustice by neglect and hurry. His longer works evince much ability, although he is rarely entitled to be called original. His MS. is exceedingly neat, clear, and forcible, the signa-

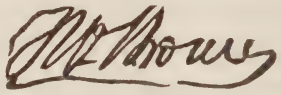
ture affording a just idea of it. It resembles that of Mr. Kennedy very nearly; but has more slope and uniformity, with, of course, less spirit, and less of the picturesque. He who writes as Mr. Herbert, will be found always to depend chiefly upon his merits of *style* for a literary reputation, and will not be unapt to fall into a pompous grandiloquence. The author of "Cromwell" is sometimes wofully turgid.



Professor PALFREY is known to the public principally through his editorship of the *North American Review*. He has a reputation for scholarship; and many of the articles which are attributed to his pen evince that this reputation is well based, so far as the common notion of scholarship extends. For the rest, he seems to dwell altogether within the narrow world of his *own* conceptions; imprisoning them by the very barrier which he has erected against the conceptions of others.

His MS. shows a total deficiency in the sense of the beautiful. It has great pretension—great straining after effect, but is altogether one of the most miserable MSS. in the world—forceless, graceless, tawdry, vacillating, and unpicturesque. The signature conveys but a faint idea of

its extravagance. However much we may admire the mere *knowledge* of the man who writes thus, it will not do to place any dependence upon his wisdom or upon his taste.

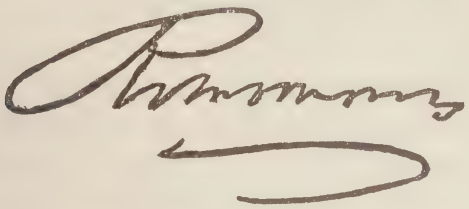


F. W. THOMAS, who began his literary career at the early age of seventeen, by a poetical lampoon upon certain Baltimore fops, has since more particularly distinguished himself as a novelist. His "Clinton Bradshawe" is perhaps better known than any of his later fictions. It is remarkable for a frank, unscrupulous portraiture of men and things, in high life and low, and by unusual discrimination and observation in respect to character. Since its publication he has produced "East and West" and "Howard Pinckney," neither of which seems to have been so popular as his first essay, although both have merit.

"East and West," published in 1836, was an attempt to portray the every-day events occurring to a fallen family emigrating from the East to the West. In it, as in "Clinton Bradshawe," most of the characters are drawn from life. "Howard Pinckney" was published in 1840.

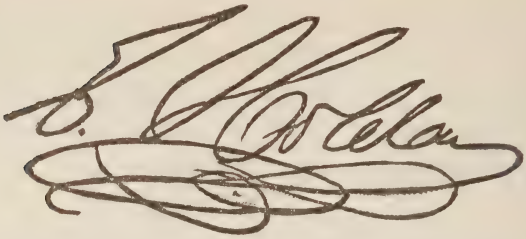
Mr. Thomas was at one period the editor of the Cincinnati *Commercial Advertiser*. He is also well known as a public lecturer on a variety of topics. His conversational powers are very great. As a poet, he has also distinguished himself. His "Emigrant" will be read with pleasure by every person of taste.

His MS. is more like that of Mr. Benjamin than that of any other literary person of our acquaintance. It has even more than the occasional nervousness of Mr. B.'s, and, as in the case of the editor of the *New World*, indicates the passionate sensibility of the man.



Mr. MORRIS ranks, we believe, as the first of our Philadelphia poets since the death of Willis Gaylord Clark. His compositions, like those of his late lamented friend, are characterized by sweetness rather than strength of versification, and by tenderness and delicacy rather than by vigor or originality of thought. A late notice of him in the *Boston Notion*, from the pen of Rufus W. Griswold, did his high qualities no more than justice. As a prose writer, he is chiefly known by his editorial contributions to the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, and by occasional essays for the magazines.

His chirography is usually very illegible, although at times sufficiently distinct. It has no marked characteristics, and like that of almost every editor in the country, has been so modified by the circumstances of his position as to afford no certain indication of the mental features.



EZRA HOLDEN has written much, not only for his paper, *The Saturday Courier*, but for our periodicals generally, and stands high in the public estimation, as a sound thinker, and still more particularly as a fearless expresser of his thoughts.

His MS. (which we are constrained to say is a shockingly bad one, and whose general features may be seen in his signature,) indicates the frank and *naïve* manner of his literary style—a style which not unfrequently flies off into whimsicalities.

Mr. GRAHAM is known to the literary world as the editor and proprietor of *Graham's Magazine*, the most popular periodical in America, and also of the *Saturday Evening Post*, of Philadelphia. For both of these journals he has written much and well.

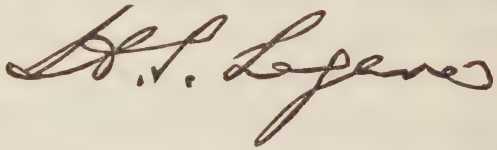
His MS. generally is very bad, or at least very illegible. At times it is sufficiently distinct, and has force and picturesqueness, speaking plainly of the *energy* which par-

ticularly distinguishes him as a man. The signature above is more scratchy than usual.

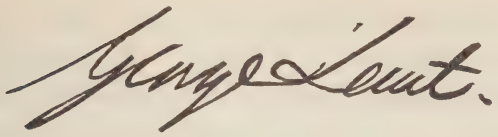
Colonel STONE, the editor of the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, is remarkable for the great difference which exists between the apparent public opinion respecting his abilities and the real estimation in which he is privately held. Through his paper, and the bustling activity always prone to thrust itself forward, he has attained an unusual degree of influence in New York, and, not only this, but what appears to be a reputation for talent. But this talent we do not remember ever to have heard assigned him by any honest man's private opinion. We place him among our *literati* because he has published certain books. Perhaps the best of these are his "Life of Brandt," and "Life and Times of Red Jacket." Of the rest, his story called "Ups and Downs," his defence of Animal Magnetism, and his pamphlets concerning Maria Monk, are scarcely the most absurd. His MS. is heavy and sprawling, resembling his mental character in a species of utter unmeaningness, which lies, like the nightmare, upon his autograph.

The labors of Mr. SPARKS, Professor of History at Harvard, are well known and justly appreciated. His MS.

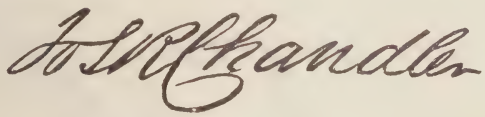
has an unusually odd appearance. The characters are large, round, black, irregular, and perpendicular—the signature, as above, being an excellent specimen of his chirography in general. In all his letters now before us, the lines are as close together as possible, giving the idea of irretrievable confusion; still none of them are illegible upon close inspection. We can form no guess in regard to any mental peculiarities from Mr. Sparks' MS., which has been, no doubt, modified by the hurrying and intricate nature of his researches. We might imagine such epistles as these to have been written in extreme haste, by a man exceedingly busy, among great piles of books and papers huddled up around him, like the chaotic tomes of Magliabecchi. The paper used in all our epistles is uncommonly fine.



The name of H. S. LEGARE is written without an accent on the final *e*, yet is pronounced as if this letter were accented,—Legaray. He contributed many articles of merit to the *Southern Review*, and has a wide reputation for scholarship and talent. His MS. resembles that of Mr. Palfrey of the *North American Review*, and their mental features appear to us nearly identical. What we have said in regard to the chirography of Mr. Palfrey will apply with equal force to that of the present secretary.



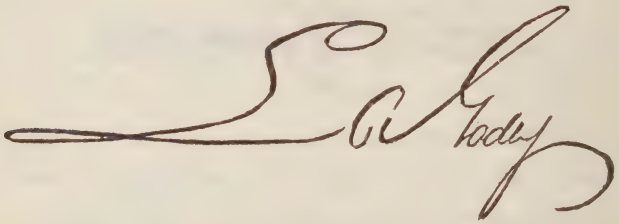
Mr. GEORGE LUNT, of Newburyport, Massachusetts, is known as a poet of much vigor of style and massiveness of thought. He delights in the grand, rather than in the beautiful, and is not unfrequently turgid, but never feeble. The traits here described impress themselves with remarkable distinctness upon his chirography, of which the signature gives a perfect idea.



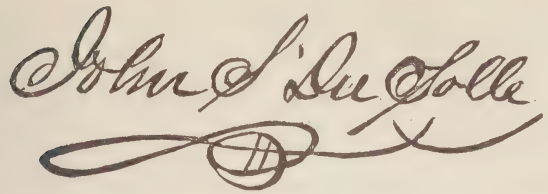
Mr. CHANDLER'S reputation as the editor of one of the best daily papers in the country, and as one of our finest *belles-lettres* scholars, is deservedly high. He is well known through his numerous addresses, essays, miscellaneous sketches, and prose tales. Some of these latter evince imaginative powers of a superior order.

His MS. is not fairly shown in his signature, the latter being much more open and bold than his general chirography. His handwriting must be included in the editorial category—it seems to have been ruined by habitual hurry.

H. T. TUCKERMAN has written one or two books consisting of "Sketches of Travels." His "Isabel" is, perhaps, better known than any of his other productions, but was never a popular work. He is a *correct* writer so far as mere English is concerned, but an insufferably tedious and dull one. He has contributed much of late days to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, with which journal, perhaps, the legibility of his MS. has been an important, if not the principal, recommendation. His chirography is neat and distinct, and has some grace, but no force—evincing, in a remarkable degree, the idiosyncrasies of the writer.

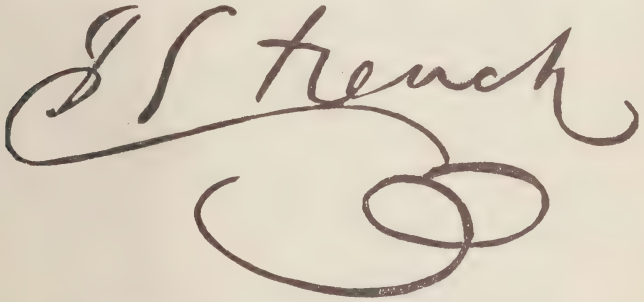


Mr. GODEY is only known to the literary world as editor and publisher of *The Lady's Book*, but his celebrity in this regard entitles him to a place in this collection. His MS. is remarkably distinct and graceful—the signature affording an excellent idea of it. The man who invariably writes so well as Mr. G. invariably does, gives evidence of a fine taste, combined with an indefatigability which will insure his permanent success in the world's affairs. No man has warmer friends or fewer enemies.



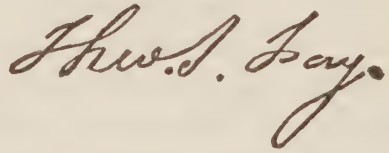
Mr. DU SOLLE is well known through his connection with the *Spirit of the Times*. His prose is forcible, and often excellent in other respects. As a poet he is entitled to higher consideration. Some of his Pindaric pieces are unusually good, and it may be doubted if we have a better *versifier* in America.

Accustomed to the daily toil of an editor, he has contracted a habit of writing hurriedly, and his MS. varies with the occasion. It is impossible to deduce any inferences from it as regards the mental character. The signature shows rather how he can write than how he does.



Mr. FRENCH is the author of a "Life of David Crockett," and also of a novel called "Elkswattawa," a denunciatory review of which, in the *Southern Messenger* some years ago, deterred him from further liter-

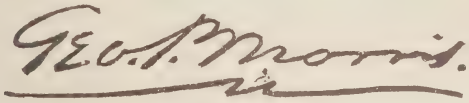
ary attempts. Should he write again, he will probably distinguish himself, for he is unquestionably a man of talent. We need no better evidence of this than his MS., which speaks of force, boldness, and originality. The flourish, however, betrays a certain *floridity* of taste.



The author of "Norman Leslie" and "The Countess Ida" has been more successful as an essayist about small matters than as a novelist. "Norman Leslie" is more familiarly remembered as "The Great Used Up," while "The Countess" made no definite impression whatever. Of course we are not to expect remarkable features in Mr. FAY'S MS. It has a wavering, finicky, and over-delicate air, without pretension to either grace or force; and the description of the chirography would answer, without alteration, for that of the literary character. Mr. F. frequently employs an amanuensis, who writes a beautiful French hand. The one must not be confounded with the other.

Dr. MITCHELL has published several pretty songs which have been set to music and become popular. He has also given to the world a volume of poems, of

which the longest was remarkable for an old-fashioned polish and vigor of versification. His MS. is rather graceful than picturesque or forcible—and these words apply equally well to his poetry in general. The signature indicates the hand.

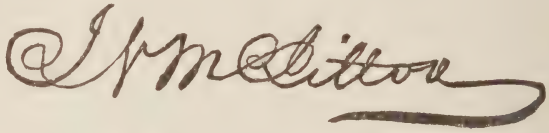


General MORRIS has composed many songs which have taken fast hold upon the popular taste, and which are deservedly celebrated. He has caught the true *tone* for these things, and hence his popularity—a popularity which his enemies would fain make us believe is altogether attributable to his editorial influence. The charge is true only in a measure. The tone of which we speak is that kind of frank, free, hearty *sentiment* (rather than philosophy) which distinguishes Béranger, and which the critics, for want of a better term, call *nationality*.

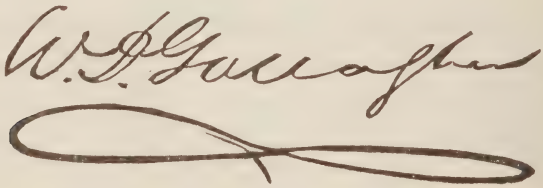
His MS. is a simple unornamented hand, rather rotund than angular, very legible, forcible, and altogether in keeping with his style.

Mr. CALVERT was at one time principal editor of the *Baltimore American*, and wrote for that journal some good paragraphs on the common topics of the day. He has also published many translations from the German,

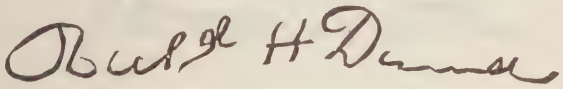
and one or two original poems—among others an imitation of "Don Juan" called "Pelayo," which did him no credit. He is essentially a feeble and commonplace writer of poetry, although his prose compositions have a certain degree of merit. His chirography indicates the "commonplace" upon which we have commented. It is a very usual, scratchy, and tapering clerk's hand—a hand which no man of talent ever did or could indite, unless compelled by circumstances of more than ordinary force. The signature is far better than the general manuscript of his epistles.



Mr. McJILTON is better known from his contributions to the journals of the day than from any book-publications. He has much talent, and it is not improbable that he will hereafter distinguish himself, although as yet he has not composed any thing of length which, as a whole, can be styled good. His MS. is not unlike that of Dr. Snodgrass, but it is somewhat clearer and better. We can predicate little respecting it beyond a love of exaggeration and *bizarrerie*.

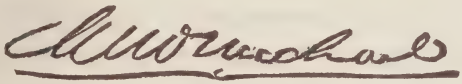


Mr. GALLAGHER is chiefly known as a poet. He is the author of some of our most popular songs, and has written many long pieces of high but unequal merit. He has the true spirit, and will rise into a just distinction hereafter. His manuscript tallies well with our opinion. It is a very fine one—clear, bold, decided, and picturesque. The signature above does not convey, in full force, the general character of his chirography, which is more rotund, and more decidedly placed upon the paper.



Mr. DANA ranks among our most eminent poets, and he has been the frequent subject of comment in our reviews. He has high qualities, undoubtedly, but his defects are many and great.

His MS. resembles that of Mr. Gallagher very nearly, but is somewhat more rolling, and has less boldness and decision. The literary traits of the two gentlemen are very similar, although Mr. Dana is by far the more polished writer, and has a scholarship which Mr. Gallagher wants.



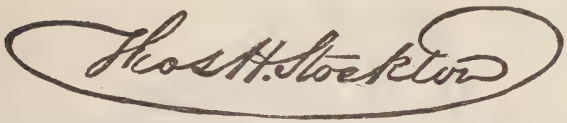
Mr. MCMICHAEL is well known to the Philadelphia public by the number and force of his prose compositions, but he has seldom been tempted into book-publication.

As a poet, he has produced some remarkably vigorous things. We have seldom seen a finer composition than a certain celebrated "Monody" of his.

His MS., when not hurried, is graceful and flowing, without picturesqueness. At times it is totally illegible. His chirography is one of those which have been so strongly modified by circumstances that it is nearly impossible to predicate any thing with certainty respecting them.

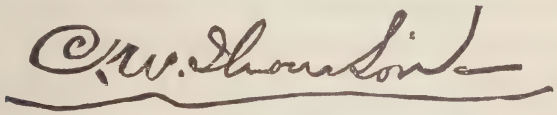
Mr. N. C. BROOKS has acquired some reputation as a magazine writer. His serious prose is often very good—is always well-worded—but in his comic attempts he fails, without appearing to be aware of his failure. As a poet he has succeeded far better. In a work which he entitled "Scriptural Anthology" among many inferior compositions of length, there were several shorter pieces of great merit:—for example, "Shelley's Obsequies" and "The Nicthanthes." Of late days we have seen little from his pen.

His MS. has much resemblance to that of Mr. Bryant, although altogether it is a better hand, with much more freedom and grace. With care Mr. Brooks can write a fine MS., just as with care he can compose a fine poem.



The Rev. THOMAS H. STOCKTON has written many pieces of fine poetry, and has lately distinguished himself as the editor of the *Christian World.*

His MS. is fairly represented by his signature, and bears much resemblance to that of Mr. N. C. Brooks, of Baltimore. Between these two gentlemen there exists also a remarkable similarity, not only of thought, but of personal bearing and character. We have already spoken of the peculiarities of Mr. B.'s chirography.

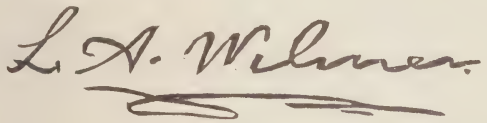


Mr. THOMSON has written many short poems, and some of them possess merit. They are characterized by tenderness and grace. His MS. has some resemblance to that of Professor Longfellow, and by many persons would be thought a finer hand. It is clear, legible, and open—what is called a rolling hand. It has too much tapering, and too much variation between the weight of the hair-strokes and the downward ones, to be forcible or picturesque. In all those qualities which we have pointed out as especially distinctive of Professor Longfellow's MS. it is remarkably deficient; and, in fact, the literary character of no two individuals could be more radically different.

The Reverend W. E. CHANNING is at the head of our moral and didactic writers. His reputation both at home and abroad is deservedly high, and in regard to the matters of purity, polish, and modulation of style, he may be said to have attained the dignity of a standard and a classic. He has, it is true, been severely criticised, even in respect to these very points, by the *Edinburgh Review*. The critic, however, made out his case but lamely, and proved nothing beyond his own incompetence. To detect occasional or even frequent inadvertences in the way of bad grammar, faulty construction, or misusage of language, is not to prove impurity of *style*—a word which happily has a bolder signification than any dreamed of by the Zoilus of the review in question. Style regards, more than any thing else, the *tone* of a composition. All the rest is not unimportant, to be sure, but appertains to the minor morals of literature, and can be learned by rote by the meanest simpletons in letters—can be carried to its highest excellence by dolts, who, upon the whole, are despicable as stylists. Irving's style is inimitable in its grace and delicacy, yet few of our practised writers are guilty of more frequent inadvertences of language. In what may be termed his mere English, he is surpassed by fifty whom we could name. Mr. Tuckerman's English, on

the contrary, is sufficiently pure, but a more lamentable style than that of his "Sicily" it would be difficult to point out.

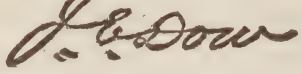
Besides those peculiarities which we have already mentioned as belonging to Dr. Channing's style, we must not fail to mention a certain calm, broad deliberateness, which constitutes *force* in its highest character, and approaches to majesty. All these traits will be found to exist plainly in his chirography, the character of which is exemplified by the signature, although this is somewhat larger than the general manuscript.



Mr. WILMER has written and published much; but he has reaped the usual fruits of a spirit of independence, and has thus failed to make that impression on the *popular* mind which his talents, under other circumstances, would have effected. But better days are in store for him, and for all who "hold to the right way," despising the yelpings of the small dogs of our literature. His prose writings have all merit—always the merit of a chastened style. But he is more favorably known by his poetry, in which the student of the British classics will find much for warm admiration. We have few better versifiers than Mr. Wilmer.

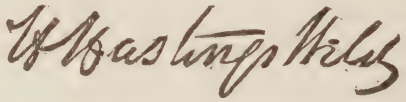
His chirography plainly indicates the cautious polish

and terseness of his style, but the signature does not convey the print-like appearance of the MS.



Mr. DOW is distinguished as the author of many fine sea-pieces, among which will be remembered a series of papers called "The Log of Old Ironsides." His land sketches are not generally so good. He has a fine imagination, which as yet is undisciplined, and leads him into occasional bombast. As a poet he has done better things than as a writer of prose.

His MS., which has been strongly modified by circumstances, gives no indication of his true character, literary or moral.



Mr. WELD is well known as the present working editor of the *New York Tattler* and *Brother Jonathan*. His attention was accidentally directed to literature about ten years ago, after a minority, to use his own words, "spent at sea, in a store, in a machine-shop, and in a printing-office." He is now, we believe, about thirty-one years of age. His deficiency of what is termed regular education would scarcely be gleaned from his editorials, which, in general, are usually well written. His "Corrected Proofs" is a work which does him high credit, and which has been

extensively circulated, although "printed at odd times by himself, when he had nothing else to do."

His MS. resembles that of Mr. Joseph C. Neal in many respects, but is less open and less legible. His signature is altogether much better than his general chirography.

Mrs. M. St. Leon Loud is one of the finest poets of this country; possessing, we think, more of the true divine *afflatus* than any of her female contemporaries. She has, in especial, *imagination* of no common order, and, unlike many of her sex whom we could mention, is not

> Content to dwell in decencies forever.

While she *can*, upon occasion, compose the ordinary metrical sing-song with all the decorous proprieties which are in fashion, she yet ventures very frequently into a more ethereal region. We refer our readers to a truly beautiful little poem entitled the "Dream of the Lonely Isle," lately published in this magazine.

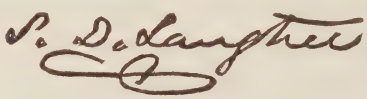
Mrs. Loud's MS. is exceedingly clear, neat, and forcible, with just sufficient effeminacy and no more.

Dr. Pliny Earle, of Frankfort, Pa., has not only distinguished himself by several works on medical and general science, but has become well known to the literary

world, of late, by a volume of very fine poems, the longest, but by no means the best, of which was entitled "Marathon." This latter is not greatly inferior to the "Marco Bozzaris" of Halleck, while some of the minor pieces equal any American poems. His chirography is peculiarly neat and beautiful, giving indication of the elaborate finish which characterizes his compositions. The signature conveys the general hand.

DAVID HOFFMAN, of Baltimore, has not only contributed much and well to monthly magazines and reviews, but has given to the world several valuable publications in book form. His style is terse, pungent, and otherwise excellent, although disfigured by a half-comic, half-serious pedantry.

His MS. has about it nothing strongly indicative of character.

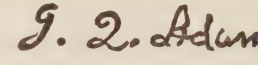


S. D. LANGTREE has been long and favorably known to the public as editor of the *Georgetown Metropolitan*, and more lately of the *Democratic Review*, both of which journals he has conducted with distinguished success. As a critic he has proved himself just, bold, and acute, while his prose compositions generally evince the man of talent and taste.

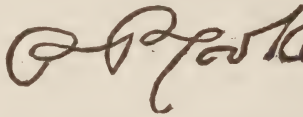
His MS. is not remarkably good, being somewhat too scratchy and tapering. We include him, of course, in the editorial category.

Judge CONRAD occupies, perhaps, the first place among our Philadelphia *literati*. He has distinguished himself both as a prose writer and a poet—not to speak of his high legal reputation. He has been a frequent contributor to the periodicals of this city, and we believe to one at least of the Eastern reviews. His first production which attracted general notice was a tragedy entitled "Conrad, King of Naples." It was performed at the Arch Street Theatre, and elicited applause from the more judicious. This play was succeeded by "Jack Cade," performed at the Walnut Street Theatre, and lately modified and reproduced under the title of "Aylmere." In its new dress, this drama has been one of the most successful ever written by an American, not only attracting crowded houses, but extorting the good word of our best critics. In occasional poetry Judge Conrad has also done well. His lines "On a Blind Boy Soliciting Charity" have been greatly admired, and many of his other pieces evince ability of a high order. His political fame is scarcely a topic for these pages, and is, moreover, too much a matter of common observation to need comment from us.

His MS. is neat, legible, and forcible, evincing combined caution and spirit in a very remarkable degree.

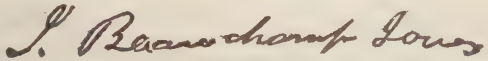


The chirography of Ex-President ADAMS (whose poem, "The Wants of Man," has of late attracted so much attention) is remarkable for a certain steadiness of purpose pervading the whole, and overcoming even the constitutional tremulousness of the writer's hand. Wavering in every letter, the entire MS. has yet a firm, regular, and decisive appearance. It is also very legible.



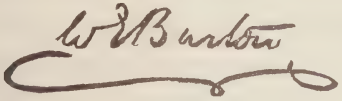
P. P. COOKE, of Winchester, Virginia, is well known, especially in the South, as the author of numerous excellent contributions to the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He has written some of the finest poetry of which America can boast. A little piece of his, entitled "Florence Vane," and contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine* of this city, during our editorship of that journal, was remarkable for the high ideality it evinced, and for the great delicacy and melody of its rhythm. It was universally admired and copied, as well here as in England. We saw it not long ago, *as original*, in *Bentley's Miscellany*. Mr. Cook has, we believe, nearly ready for press a novel called "Maurice Werterbern," whose success we predict with confidence.

His MS. is clear, forcible, and legible, but disfigured by some of that affectation which is scarcely a blemish in his literary style.



Mr. J. BEAUCHAMP JONES has been, we believe, connected for many years past with the lighter literature of Baltimore, and at present edits the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor* with much judgment and general ability. He is the author of a series of papers of high merit now in course of publication in the *Visitor*, and entitled "Wild Western Scenes."

His MS. is distinct, and might be termed a fine one; but is somewhat too much in consonance with the ordinary clerk style to be either graceful or forcible.

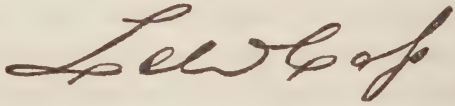


Mr. BURTON is better known as a comedian than as a literary man, but he has written many short prose articles of merit, and his quondam editorship of the *Gentleman's Magazine* would, at all events, entitle him to a place in this collection. He has, moreover, published one or two books. An annual issued by Carey and Hart in 1840 consisted entirely of prose contributions from himself, with poetical ones from Charles West Thomson, Esq. In this work many of the tales were good.

Mr. Burton's MS. is scratchy and *petite*, betokening indecision and care or caution.

RICHARD HENRY WILDE, of Georgia, has acquired much reputation as a poet, and especially as the author of a little piece entitled "My Life is like the Summer Rose," whose claim to originality has been made the subject of repeated and reiterated attack and defence. Upon the whole it is hardly worth quarrelling about. Far better verses are to be found in every second newspaper we take up. Mr. Wilde has also lately published, or is about to publish, a "Life of Tasso," for which he has been long collecting material.

His MS. has all the peculiar sprawling and elaborate tastelessness of Mr. Palfrey's, to which altogether it bears a marked resemblance. The love of effect, however, is more perceptible in Mr. Wilde's than even in Mr. Palfrey's.



LEWIS CASS, the Ex-Secretary of War, has distinguished himself as one of the finest *belles-lettres* scholars of America. At one period he was a very regular con-

tributor to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and even lately he has furnished that journal with one or two very excellent papers.

His MS. is clear, deliberate, and statesmanlike, resembling that of Edward Everett very closely. It is not often that we see a letter written altogether by himself. He generally employs an amanuensis, whose chirography does not differ materially from his own, but is somewhat more regular.

Mr. JAMES BROOKS enjoys rather a private than a public literary reputation; but his talents are unquestionably great, and his productions have been numerous and excellent. As the author of many of the celebrated "Jack Downing" letters, and as the reputed author of the whole of them, he would at all events be entitled to a place among our *literati*.

His chirography is simple, clear, and legible, with little grace and less boldness. These traits are precisely those of his literary style.

As the authorship of the "Jack Downing" letters is even still considered by many a moot point (although in fact there should be no question about it), and as we have al-

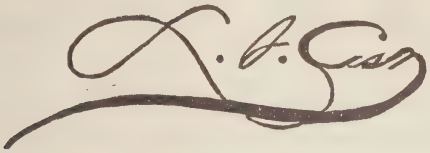
ready given the signature of Mr. Seba Smith, and (just above) of Mr. Brooks, we now present our readers with a fac-simile signature of the "*veritable Jack*" himself, written by him individually in our own bodily presence. Here, then, is an opportunity of comparison.

The chirography of "the veritable Jack" is a very good, honest, sensible hand, and not very dissimilar to that of Ex-President Adams.

Mr. J. R. LOWELL, of Massachusetts, is entitled, in our opinion, to at least the second or third place among the poets of America. We say this on account of the vigor of his *imagination*—a faculty to be first considered in all criticism upon poetry. In this respect he surpasses, we think, any of our writers (at least any of those who have put themselves prominently forth as poets) with the exception of Longfellow, and perhaps one other. His ear for rhythm, nevertheless, is imperfect, and he is very far from possessing the artistic ability of either Longfellow, Bryant, Halleck, Sprague, or Pierpont. The reader desirous of properly estimating the powers of Mr. Lowell will find a very beautiful little poem from his pen in the October number of this magazine. There is one also (not quite so fine) in the number for last month. He will contribute regularly.

His MS. is strongly indicative of the vigor and precision of his poetical thought. The man who writes thus, for

example, will never be guilty of metaphorical extravagance, and there will be found *terseness* as well as strength in all that he does.

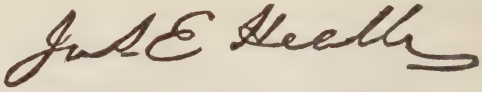


Mr. L. J. CIST, of Cincinnati, has not written much prose, and is known especially by his poetical compositions, many of which have been very popular, although they are at times disfigured by false metaphor, and by a meretricious straining after effect. This latter foible makes itself clearly apparent in his chirography, which abounds in ornamental flourishes, not ill executed, to be sure, but in very bad taste.

Mr. ARTHUR is not without a rich talent for description of scenes in low life, but is uneducated, and too fond of mere vulgarities to please a refined taste. He has published "The Subordinate," and "Insubordination," two tales distinguished by the peculiarities above mentioned. He has also written much for our weekly papers and *The Lady's Book*.

His hand is a commonplace clerk's hand, such as we

might expect him to write. The signature is much better than the general MS.

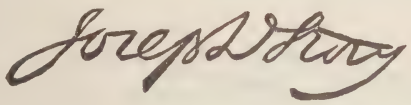


Mr. HEATH is almost the only person of any literary distinction residing in the chief city of the Old Dominion. He edited the *Southern Literary Messenger* in the five or six first months of its existence; and, since the secession of the writer of this article, has frequently aided in its editorial conduct. He is the author of "Edge-Hill," a well-written novel, which, owing to the circumstances of its publication, did not meet with the reception it deserved. His writings are rather polished and graceful than forcible or original, and these peculiarities can be traced in his chirography.

Dr. THOMAS HOLLEY CHIVERS, of New York, is at the same time one of the best and one of the worst poets in America. His productions affect one as a wild dream—strange, incongruous, full of images of more than arabesque monstrosity, and snatches of sweet unsustained song. Even his worst nonsense (and some of it is horrible) has an indefinite charm of sentiment and melody. We can never be sure that there is *any* meaning in his words—neither is there any meaning in many of our finest musical airs—but the effect is very similar in both. His figures

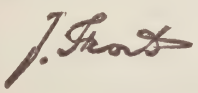
of speech are metaphor run mad, and his grammar is often none at all. Yet there are as fine individual passages to be found in the poems of Dr. Chivers as in those of any poet whatsoever.

His MS. resembles that of P. P. Cooke very nearly, and in poetical character the two gentlemen are closely akin. Mr. Cooke is, by much, the more *correct*, while Dr. Chivers is sometimes the more poetic. Mr. C. always sustains himself; Dr. C. never.



Judge STORY and his various literary and political labors, are too well known to require comment.

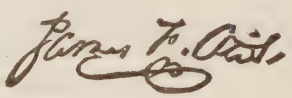
His chirography is a noble one—bold, clear, massive, and deliberate, betokening in the most unequivocal manner all the characteristics of his intellect. The plain, unornamented style of his compositions is impressed with accuracy upon his handwriting, the whole air of which is well conveyed in the signature.



Mr. JOHN FROST, Prosessor of Belles-Lettres in the High School of Philadelphia, and at present editor of *The Young People's Book* has distinguished himself by numerous literary compositions for the periodicals of the day, and by a great number of published works which

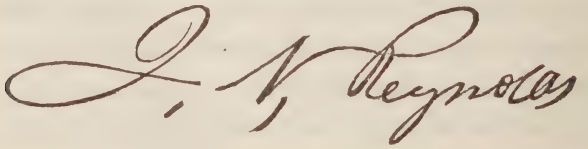
come under the head of the *utile* rather than that of the *dulce*—at least in the estimation of the young. He is a gentleman of fine taste, sound scholarship, and great general ability.

His chirography denotes his mental idiosyncrasy with great precision. Its careful neatness, legibility, and finish are but a part of that turn of mind which leads him so frequently into compilation. The signature here given is more diminutive than usual.



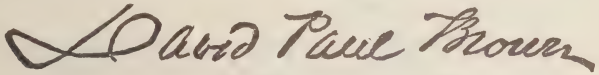
Mr. J. F. OTIS is well known as a writer for the magazines; and has, at various times, been connected with many of the leading newspapers of the day—especially with those in New York and Washington. His prose and poetry are equally good; but he writes too much and too hurriedly to write invariably well. His taste is fine, and his judgment in literary matters is to be depended upon at all times when not interfered with by his personal antipathies or predilections.

His chirography is exceedingly illegible, and, like his style, has every possible fault except that of the commonplace.



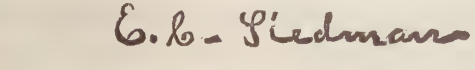
Mr. REYNOLDS occupied at one time a distinguished position in the eye of the public, on account of his great and laudable exertions to get up the American South Polar expedition, from a personal participation in which he was most shamefully excluded. He has written much and well. Among other works, the public are indebted to him for a graphic account of the noted voyage of the frigate Potomac to Madagascar.

His MS. is an ordinary clerk's hand, giving no indication of character.



DAVID PAUL BROWN is scarcely more distinguished in his legal capacity than by his literary compositions. As a dramatic writer he has met with much success. His "Sertorius" has been particularly well received both upon the stage and in the closet. His fugitive productions, both in prose and verse, have also been numerous, diversified, and excellent.

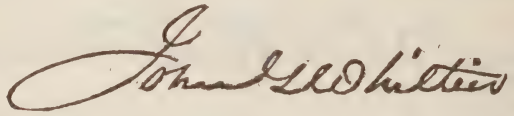
His chirography has no doubt been strongly modified by the circumstances of his position. No one can expect a lawyer in full practice to give in his MS. any true indication of his intellect or character.



Mrs. E. CLEMENTINE STEDMAN has lately attracted much attention by the delicacy and grace of her poetical

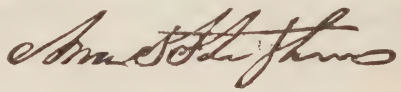
compositions, as well as by the piquancy and spirit of her prose. For some months past we have been proud to rank her among the best of the contributors to *Graham's Magazine*.

Her chirography differs as materially from that of her sex in general as does her literary manner from the usual namby-pamby of our blue-stockings. It is indeed a beautiful MS., very closely resembling that of Professor Longfellow, but somewhat more diminutive, and far more full of grace.



J. GREENLEAF WHITTIER is placed by his particular admirers in the very front rank of American poets. We are not disposed, however, to agree with their decision in every respect. Mr. Whittier is a fine versifier, so far as strength is regarded independently of modulation. His subjects, too, are usually chosen with the view of affording scope to a certain *vivida vis* of expression which seems to be his forte; but in taste, and especially in *imagination*, which Coleridge has justly styled the *soul* of all poetry, he is ever remarkably deficient. His themes are *never* to our liking.

His chirography is an ordinary clerk's hand, affording little indication of character.



Mrs. ANN S. STPEHENS was at one period the editor of *The Portland Magazine*, a periodical of which we have not heard for some time, and which, we presume, has been discontinued. More lately her name has been placed upon the title-page of *The Lady's Companion* of New York, as one of the conductors of that journal, to which she has contributed many articles of merit and popularity. She has also written much and well for various other periodicals, and will hereafter enrich this magazine with her compositions, and act as one of its editors.

Her MS. is a very excellent one, and differs from that of her sex in general by an air of more than usual force and freedom.

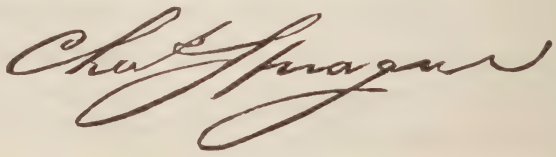
Note.—The foregoing "Chapter on Autography," as will be seen from a reference in the following appendix, originally appeared in two parts.—*Ed.*

APPENDIX.

IN the foregoing *fac-simile* signatures of the most distinguished American *literati* our design was to furnish a *complete* series of autographs, embracing a specimen of the MS. of *each of the most noted among our living male and female writers.* For obvious reasons, we made no attempt at classification or arrangement—either in reference to reputation or our own private opinion of merit. Our second article will be found to contain as many of the *Dii majorum gentium* as our first; and this, our third and last, as many as either—although fewer

names, upon the whole, than the preceding papers. The impossibility of procuring the signatures now given, at a period sufficiently early for the immense edition of December, has obliged us to introduce this Appendix.

It is with great pleasure that we have found our anticipations fulfilled in respect to the *popularity* of these chapters—our individual claim to merit is so trivial that we may be permitted to say so much,—but we confess it was with no less surprise than pleasure that we observed so little discrepancy of opinion manifested in relation to the hasty critical, or rather gossiping, observations which accompanied the signatures. Where the subject was so wide and so necessarily *personal*—where the claims of more than one hundred *literati*, summarily disposed of, were turned over for re-adjudication to a press so intricately bound up in their interests as is ours—it is really surprising how little of dissent was mingled with so much of general comment. The fact, however, speaks loudly to one point :—to the *unity of truth*. It assures us that the differences which exist among us are differences not of real, but of affected, opinion, and that the voice of him who maintains fearlessly what he believes honestly, is pretty sure to find an echo (if the speaking be not mad) in the vast heart of the world at large.



The "Writings of CHARLES SPRAGUE" were first collected and published about nine months ago by Mr. Charles S. Francis of New York. At the time of the issue of the book we expressed our opinion frankly in respect to the general merits of the author—an opinion with which one or two members of the Boston press did not see fit to agree—but which, as yet, we have found no reason for modifying. What we say now is, in spirit, merely a repetition of what we said then. Mr. Sprague is an accomplished *belles-lettres* scholar, so far as the usual ideas of scholarship extend. He is a very correct rhetorician of the old school. His versification has not been equalled by that of any American—has been surpassed by no one living or dead. In this regard there are to be found finer passages in his poems than any elsewhere. These are his chief merits. In the *essentials* of poetry he is excelled by twenty of our countrymen whom we could name. Except in a very few instances he gives no evidence of the loftier ideality. His "Winged Worshippers," and "Lines on the Death of M. S. C." are *beautiful* poems—but he has written nothing else which should be called so. His "Shakspeare Ode," upon which his high reputation mainly depended, is quite a *second-hand* affair—with no merit whatever beyond that of a polished and vigorous versification. Its imitation of "Collins' Ode to the Passions" is obvious. Its allegorical conduct is mawkish, *passé*, and absurd. The poem, upon the whole, is just such a one as would have obtained its author an Etonian

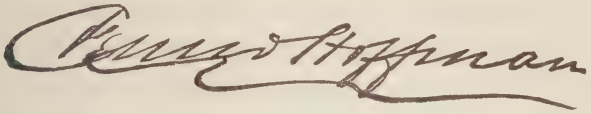
prize some forty or fifty years ago. It is an exquisite specimen of mannerism, without meaning and without merit—of an artificial, but most inartistical, style of composition, of which conventionality is the soul; taste, nature, and reason the antipodes. A man may be a clever financier without being a genius.

It requires but little effort to see in Mr. Sprague's MS. all the idiosyncrasy of his intellect. Here are distinctness, precision, and vigor—but vigor employed upon *grace* rather than upon its legitimate functions. The signature fully indicates the general hand—in which the spirit of elegant imitation and conversation may be seen reflected as in a mirror.

Mr. CORNELIUS MATHEWS is one of the editors of *Arcturus*, a monthly journal which has attained much reputation during the brief period of its existence. He is the author of "Puffer Hopkins," a clever satirical tale somewhat given to excess in caricature, and also of the well-written retrospective criticisms which appear in his magazine. He is better known, however, by "The Motley Book," published some years ago—a work which we had no opportunity of reading. He is a gentleman of taste and judgment unquestionably.

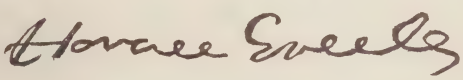
His MS. is much to our liking—bold, distinct, and pic-

turesque,—such a hand as no one destitute of talent indites. The signature conveys the hand.



Mr. CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN is the author of "A Winter in the West," "Greyslaer," and other productions of merit. At one time he edited, with much ability, the *American Monthly Magazine* in conjunction with Mr. Benjamin, and subsequently with Dr. Bird. He is a gentleman of talent.

His chirography is not unlike that of Mr. Mathews. It has the same boldness, strength, and picturesqueness, but is more diffuse, more ornamented, and less legible. Our *fac-simile* is from a somewhat hurried signature, which fails in giving a correct idea of the general hand.



Mr. HORACE GREELEY, present editor of the *Tribune*, and formerly of the *New Yorker*, has for many years been remarked as one of the most able and honest of American editors. He has written much and invariably well. His political knowledge is equal to that of any of his contemporaries—his general information extensive. As a *belles-lettres* critic he is entitled to high respect.

His manuscript is a remarkable one—having about it a peculiarity which we know not how better to designate

than as a *converse* of the picturesque. His characters are scratchy and irregular, ending with an *abrupt taper*—if we may be allowed this contradiction in terms, where we have the *fac-simile* to prove that there is no contradiction in fact. All abrupt MSS., save this, have square or *concise* terminations of the letters. The whole chirography puts us in mind of a *jig*. We can fancy the writer jerking up his hand from the paper at the end of each word, and, indeed, of each letter. What mental idiosyncrasy lies *perdu* beneath all this is more than we can say, but we will venture to assert that Mr. Greeley (whom we do not know personally) is, *personally*, a very remarkable man.

The name of Mr. PROSPER M. WETMORE is familiar to all readers of American light literature. He has written a great deal, at various periods, both in prose and poetry (but principally in the latter) for our papers, magazines, and annuals. Of late days we have seen but little, comparatively speaking, from his pen.

His MS. is not unlike that of Fitz-Greene Halleck, but is by no means so good. Its clerky flourishes indicate a love of the beautiful with an undue straining for effect—qualities which are distinctly traceable in his poetic efforts. As many as five or six words are occasionally run together; and no man who writes thus will be noted for *finish* of style. Mr. Wetmore is sometimes very slovenly in his best compositions.

Professor WARE, of Harvard, has written some very excellent poetry, but is chiefly known by his "Life of the Saviour," "Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching," and other religious works.

His MS. is fully shown in the signature. It evinces the direct unpretending strength and simplicity which characterizes the man, not less than his general compositions.

The name of WILLIAM B. O. PEABODY, like that of Mr. Wetmore, is known chiefly to the readers of our light literature, and much more familiarly to Northern than to Southern readers. He is a resident of Springfield, Mass. His occasional poems have been much admired.

His chirography is what would be called beautiful by the ladies universally, and, perhaps, by a large majority of the bolder sex. Individually, we think it a miserable one —too careful, undecided, tapering, and effeminate. It is not unlike Mr. Paulding's, but is more regular and more legible, with less force. We hold it as undeniable that no man of *genius* ever wrote such a hand.

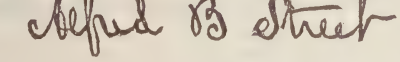
EPES SARGENT, Esq., has acquired high reputation as the author of "Velasco," a tragedy full of beauty as a poem, but not adapted—perhaps not intended—for representation. He has written, besides, many very excellent poems—"The Missing Ship," for example, published in the *Knickerbocker;* "The Night Storm at Sea"; and, especially, a fine production entitled "Shells and Sea-Weeds." One or two Theatrical Addresses from his pen are very creditable *in their way*—but the way itself is, as we have before said, execrable. As an editor, Mr. Sargent has also distinguished himself. He is a gentleman of taste and high talent.

His MS. is too much in the usual clerk style to be either vigorous, graceful, or easily read. It resembles Mr. Wetmore's, but has somewhat more force. The signature is better than the general hand, but conveys its idea very well.

The name of WASHINGTON ALLSTON, the poet and painter, is one that has been long before the public. Of his paintings we have here nothing to say—except briefly, that the most noted of them are not to our taste. His poems are not all of a high order of merit; and, in truth, the faults of his pencil and of his pen are identical. Yet every reader will remember his "Spanish Maid" with pleasure; and the "Address to Great Britain," first published in Coleridge's "Sibylline Leaves," and attributed

to an English author, is a production of which Mr. Allston may be proud.

His MS., notwithstanding an exceedingly simple and boyish air, is one which we particularly admire. It is forcible, picturesque, and legible, without ornament of any description. Each letter is formed with a thorough distinctness and individuality. Such a MS. indicates caution and precision, most unquestionably—but we say of it as we say of Mr. Peabody's (a very different MS.), that no man of original genius ever did or could habitually indite it under any circumstances whatever. The signature conveys the general hand with accuracy.



Mr. ALFRED B. STREET has been long before the public as a poet. At as early an age as fifteen, some of his pieces were published by Bryant in the *Evening Post*; among these was one of much merit, entitled a "Winter Scene." In the "New York Book," and in the collections of American poetry by Messieurs Keese and Bryant, will be found many excellent specimens of his maturer powers. "The Willewemock," "The Forest Tree," "The Indian's Vigil," "The Lost Hunter," and "White Lake," we prefer to any of his other productions which have met our eye. Mr. Street has fine taste, and a keen sense of the beautiful. He writes carefully, elaborately, and correctly. He has made Mr. Bryant his model, and in all Mr.

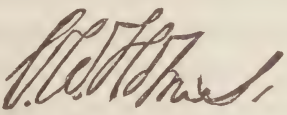
Bryant's good points would be nearly his equal, were it it not for the sad and too perceptible stain of the imitation. That he has imitated at all—or rather that, in mature age, he has persevered in his imitations—is sufficient warranty for placing him among the men of talent rather than among the men of genius.

His MS. is full corroboration of this warranty. It is a very pretty chirography, graceful, legible, and neat. By most persons it would be called beautiful. The fact is, it is without fault—but its merits, like those of his poems, are chiefly negative.

Mr. RICHARD PENN SMITH, although perhaps better known in Philadelphia than elsewhere, has acquired much literary reputation. His chief works are "The Forsaken," a novel; a pseudo-autobiography called "Colonel Crockett's Tour in Texas," the tragedy of "Caius Marius," and two domestic dramas entitled "The Disowned" and "The Deformed." He has also published two volumes of miscellanies under the title of "The Actress of Padua and other Tales," besides occasional poetry. We are not sufficiently cognizant of any of these works to speak with decision respecting their merits. In a biography of Mr. Smith, however, very well written, by his friend, Mr. McMichael, of this city, we are informed of "The Forsaken," that "a large edition of it was speedily exhausted";

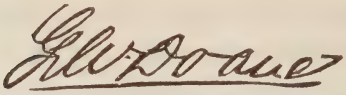
of "The Actress of Padua," that it "had an extensive sale and was much commended"; of the "Tour in Texas," that "few books attained an equal popularity"; of "Caius Marius," that "it has great capabilities for an acting play"; of "The Disowned" and "The Deformed," that they "were performed at the London theatres, where they both made a favorable impression"; and of his poetry in general, "that it will be found superior to the average quality of that commodity." "It is by his dramatic efforts," says the biographer, "that his merits as a poet must be determined, and judged by these he will be assigned a place in the foremost rank of American writers." We have only to add that we have the highest respect for the judgment of Mr. McMichael.

Mr. Smith's MS. is clear, graceful, and legible, and would generally be called a fine hand, but is somewhat too clerky for our taste.



Dr. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, of Boston, late Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Dartmouth College, has written many productions of merit, and has been pronounced by a very high authority the best of the humorous poets of the day.

His chirography is remarkably fine, and a quick fancy might easily detect, in its graceful yet picturesque quaintness, an analogy with the vivid drollery of his style. The signature is a fair specimen of the general MS.



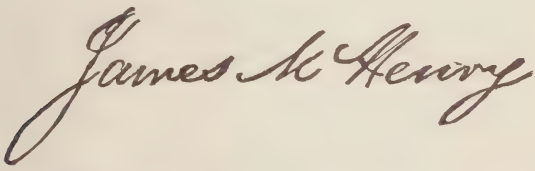
Bishop DOANE, of New Jersey, is somewhat more extensively known in his clerical than in a literary capacity, but has accomplished much more than sufficient in the world of books to entitle him to a place among the most noted of our living men of letters. The compositions by which he is best known were published, we believe, during his professorship of Rhetoric and Belles-Letters in Washington College, Hartford.

His MS. has some resemblance to that of Mr Greeley of the *Tribune*. The signature is far bolder and altogether better than the general hand.

We believe that Mr. ALBERT PIKE has never published his poems in book form; nor has he written any thing since 1834. His "Hymns to the Gods," and "Ode to the Mocking Bird," being printed in *Blackwood*, are the chief basis of his reputation. His lines "To Spring" are, however, much better in every respect, and a little poem from his pen, entitled "Ariel," originally published in the *Boston Pearl*, is one of the finest of American compositions. Mr. Pike has unquestionably merit, and that of a high order. His ideality is rich and well disciplined. He is the most *classic* of our poets in the best sense of the term, and of course his classicism is very different from that of

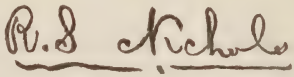
Mr. Sprague—to whom, nevertheless, he bears much resemblance in other respects. Upon the whole, there are few of our native writers to whom we consider him inferior.

His MS. shows clearly the spirit of his intellect. We observe in it a keen sense not only of the beautiful and graceful, but of the picturesque—neatness, precision, and general finish, verging upon effeminacy. In force it is deficient. The signature fails to convey the entire MS., which depends upon masses for its peculiar character.



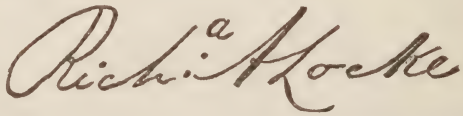
Dr. JAMES MCHENRY, of Philadelphia, is well known to the literary world as the writer of numerous articles in our reviews and lighter journals, but more especially as the author of "The Antediluvians," an epic poem which has been the victim of a most shameful cabal in this country, and the subject of a very disgraceful pasquinade on the part of Professor Wilson. Whatever may be the demerits, in some regard, of this poem, there can be no question of the utter want of fairness, and even of common decency, which distinguished the Philippic in question. The writer of a *just* review of "The Antediluvians" —the only tolerable American epic—would render an important service to the literature of his country.

Dr. McHenry's MS. is distinct, bold, and simple, without ornament or superfluity. The signature well conveys the idea of the general hand.



Mrs. R. S. NICHOLS has acquired much reputation of late years by frequent and excellent contributions to the magazines and annuals. Many of her compositions will be found in our pages.

Her MS. is fair, neat, and legible, but formed somewhat too much upon the ordinary boarding-school model to afford any indication of character. The signature is a good specimen of the hand.



Mr. RICHARD ADAMS LOCKE is one among the few men of *unquestionable genius* whom the country possesses. Of the "Moon Hoax" it is supererogatory to say one word—not to know *that* argues one's self unknown. Its rich imagination will long dwell in the memory of every one who reads it, and surely if

> the worth of any thing
> Is just so much as it will bring—

if, in short, we are to judge of the value of a literary composition in any degree by its *effect*—then was the "Hoax" most precious.

But Mr. Locke is also a poet of high order. We have seen—nay, more—we have heard him read—verses of his own which would make the fortune of two thirds of our poetasters; and he is yet so modest as never to have published a volume of poems. As an editor—as a political writer—as a writer in general—we think that he has scarcely a superior in America. There is no man among us to whose sleeve we would rather pin—not our *faith*—(of that we say nothing)—but our *judgment*.

His MS. is clear, bold, and forcible—somewhat modified, no doubt, by the circumstance of his editorial position—but still sufficiently indicative of his fine intellect.

Mr. RALPH WALDO EMERSON belongs to a class of gentlemen with whom we have no patience whatever—the mystics for mysticism's sake. Quintilian mentions a pedant who taught obscurity, and who once said to a pupil: "This is excellent, for I do not understand it myself." How the good man would have chuckled over Mr. E.! His present *rôle* seems to be the out-Carlyling Carlyle. *Lycophron Tenebrosus* is a fool to him. The best answer to his twaddle is *cui bono?*—a very little Latin phrase very generally mistranslated and misunderstood—*cui bono?*—to whom is it a benefit? If not to Mr. Emerson individually, then surely to no man living.

His love of the obscure does not prevent him, neverthe-

less, from the composition of occasional poems in which beauty is apparent *by flashes*. Several of his effusions appeared in the *Western Messenger*—more in the *Dial*, of which he is the soul—or the sun—or the shadow. We remember the "Sphynx," the "Problem," the "Snow Storm," and some fine old-fashioned verses, entitled "Oh fair and stately maid whose eye."

His MS. is bad, sprawling, illegible, and irregular—although sufficiently bold. This latter trait may be, and no doubt is, only a portion of his general affectation.

THE LITERATI.

[In 1846, Mr. Poe published in *The Lady's Book* a series of six articles, entitled "The Literati of New York City," in which he professed to give "some honest opinions at random respecting their autorial merits, with occasional words of personality." The series was introduced by the following paragraphs, and the personal sketches were given in the order in which they are here reprinted, from "George Bush" to "Richard Adams Locke." The other notices of American and foreign writers, were contributed by Mr. Poe to various journals, chiefly in the last four or five years of his life.]

IN a criticism on Bryant I was at some pains in pointing out the distinction between the popular "opinion" of the merits of contemporary authors, and that held and expressed of them in private literary society. The former species of "opinion" can be called "opinion" only by courtesy. It is the public's own, just as we consider a book our own when we have bought it. In general, this opinion is adopted from the journals of the day, and I have endeavored to show that the cases are rare indeed in which these journals express any other sentiment about books than such as may be attributed directly or indirectly to the authors of the books. The most "popular," the most "successful" writers among us (for

a brief period, at least) are, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, persons of mere address, perseverance, effrontery —in a word, busy-bodies, toadies, quacks. These people easily succeed in *boring* editors (whose attention is too often entirely engrossed by politics or other "business" matter) into the admission of favorable notices written or caused to be written by interested parties—or, at least, into the admission of *some* notice where, under ordinary circumstances, *no* notice would be given at all. In this way ephemeral "reputations" are manufactured, which, for the most part, serve all the purposes designed—that is to say, the putting money into the purse of the quack and the quack's publisher; for there never was a quack who could be brought to comprehend the value of mere fame. Now, men of genius will not resort to these manœuvres, because genius involves in its very essence a scorn of chicanery; and thus for a time the quacks always get the advantage of them, both in respect to pecuniary profit and what *appears* to be public esteem.

There is another point of view too. Your literary quacks court, in especial, the personal acquaintance of those "connected with the press." Now these latter, even when penning a voluntary, that is to say, an uninstigated notice of the book of an acquaintance, feel as if writing not so much for the eye of the public as for the eye of the acquaintance, and the notice is fashioned accordingly. The bad points of the work are slurred over, and the good ones brought out into the best light, all this

through a feeling akin to that which makes it unpleasant to speak ill of one to one's face. In the case of men of genius, editors, as a general rule, have no such delicacy —for the simple reason that, as a general rule, they have no acquaintance with these men of genius, a class proverbial for shunning society.

But the very editors who hesitate at saying in print an ill word of an author personally known, are usually the most frank in speaking about him privately. In literary society, they seem bent upon avenging the wrongs self-inflicted upon their own consciences. Here, accordingly, the quack is treated as he deserves—even a little more harshly than he deserves—by way of striking a balance. True merit, on the same principle, is apt to be slightly overrated; but, upon the whole, there is a close approximation to absolute honesty of opinion; and this honesty is further secured by the mere trouble to which it puts one in conversation to model one's countenance to a falsehood. We place on paper without hesitation a tissue of flatteries, to which in society we could not give utterance, for our lives, without either blushing or laughing outright.

For these reasons there exists a very remarkable discrepancy between the apparent public opinion of any given author's merits, and the opinion which is expressed of him orally by those who are best qualified to judge. For example, Mr. Hawthorne, the author of "Twice-Told Tales," is scarcely recognized by the press or by the pub-

lic, and when noticed at all, is noticed merely to be damned by faint praise. Now, my own opinion of him is, that, although his walk is limited, and he is fairly to be charged with mannerism, treating all subjects in a similar tone of dreamy *inuendo*, yet in this walk he evinces extraordinary genius, having no rival either in America or elsewhere—and this opinion I have never heard gainsaid by any one literary person in the country. That this opinion, however, is a spoken and not a written one, is referable to the facts: first, that Mr. Hawthorne *is* a poor man; and, second, that he *is not* an ubiquitous quack.

Again, of Mr. Longfellow, who, although a little quacky *per se*, has, through his social and literary position as a man of property and a professor at Harvard, a whole legion of active quacks at his control—of *him* what is the apparent popular opinion? Of course, that he is a poetical phenomenon, as entirely without fault, as is the luxurious paper upon which his poems are invariably borne to the public eye. In private society he is regarded with one voice as a poet of far more than usual ability, a skilful artist, and a well-read man, but as less remarkable in either capacity than as a determined imitator and a dexterous adapter of the ideas of other people. For years I have conversed with no literary person who did not entertain precisely these ideas of Professor L.; and, in fact, on all literary topics there is in society a seemingly wonderful coincidence of opinion. The author accustomed to seclusion, and mingling for the first time with those who have

been associated with him only through their works, is astonished and delighted at finding common to all whom he meets, conclusions which he had blindly fancied were attained by himself alone, and in opposition to the judgment of mankind.

In the series of papers which I now propose, my design is, in giving my own unbiassed opinion of the *literati* (male and female) of New York, to give at the same time very closely, if not with absolute accuracy, that of conversational society in literary circles. It must be expected, of course, that, in innumerable particulars, I shall differ from the voice, that is to say, from what appears to be the voice of the public—but this is a matter of no consequence whatever.

New York literature may be taken as a fair representation of that of the country at large. The city itself is the focus of American letters. Its authors include, perhaps, one fourth of all in America, and the influence they exert on their brethren, if seemingly silent, is not the less extensive and decisive. As I shall have to speak of many individuals, my limits will not permit me to speak of them otherwise than in brief; but this brevity will be merely consistent with the design, which is that of simple *opinion*, with little of either argument or detail. With one or two exceptions, I am well acquainted with every author to be introduced, and I shall avail myself of the acquaintance to convey, generally, some idea of the personal appearance of all who, in this regard, would be likely to interest

my readers. As any precise order or arrangement seems unnecessary and may be inconvenient, I shall maintain none. It will be understood that, without reference to supposed merit or demerit, each individual is introduced absolutely at random.

GEORGE BUSH.

The Rev. GEORGE BUSH is Professor of Hebrew in the University of New York, and has long been distinguished for the extent and variety of his attainments in oriental literature; indeed, as an oriental linguist, it is probable that he has no equal among us. He has published a great deal, and his books have always the good fortune to attract attention throughout the civilized world. His "Treatise on the Millennium" is, perhaps, that of his earlier compositions by which he is most extensively as well as most favorably known. Of late days he has created a singular commotion in the realm of theology, by his "Anastasis, or the Doctrine of the Resurrection: in which it is shown that the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is not sanctioned by Reason or Revelation." This work has been zealously attacked, and as zealously defended by the professor and his friends. There can be no doubt that, up to this period, the Bushites have had the best of the battle. The "Anastasis" is lucidly, succinctly, vigorously, and logically written, and proves, in my opinion, every thing that it attempts—provided we

admit the imaginary axioms from which it starts; and this is as much as can be well said of any theological disquisition under the sun. It might be hinted, too, in reference as well to Professor Bush as to his opponents, "*que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient.*" A subsequent work on "The Soul," by the author of "Anastasis," has made nearly as much noise as the "Anastasis" itself.

Taylor, who wrote so ingeniously "The Natural History of Enthusiasm," might have derived many a valuable hint from the study of Professor Bush. No man is more ardent in his theories; and these latter are neither few nor commonplace. He is a Mesmerist and a Swedenborgian —has lately been engaged in editing Swedenborg's works, publishing them in numbers. He converses with fervor, and often with eloquence. Very probably he will establish an independent church.

He is one of the most amiable men in the world, universally respected and beloved. His frank, unpretending simplicity of demeanor, is especially winning.

In person he is tall, nearly six feet, and spare, with large bones. His countenance expresses rather benevolence and profound earnestness, than high intelligence. The eyes are piercing; the other features, in general, massive. The forehead, phrenologically, indicates causality and comparison, with deficient ideality—the organization which induces strict logicality from insufficient premises.

He walks with a slouching gait and with an air of abstraction. His dress is exceedingly plain. In respect to the arrangement about his study, he has many of the Magliabechian habits. He is, perhaps, fifty-five years of age, and seems to enjoy good health.

GEORGE H. COLTON.

Mr. COLTON is noted as the author of "Tecumseh," and as the originator and editor of *The American Review*, a Whig magazine of the higher (that is to say, of the five-dollar) class. I must not be understood as meaning any disrespect to the work. It is, in my opinion, by far the best of its order in this country, and is supported in the way of contribution by many of the very noblest intellects. Mr. Colton, if in nothing else, has shown himself a man of genius in his successful establishment of the magazine within so brief a period. It is now commencing its second year, and I can say, from my own personal knowledge, that its circulation exceeds two thousand—it is probably about two thousand five hundred. So marked and immediate a success has never been attained by any of our five-dollar magazines, with the exception of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, which, in the course of nineteen months (subsequent to the seventh from its commencement), attained a circulation of rather more than five thousand.

I cannot conscientiously call Mr. Colton a good editor,

although I think that he will finally be so. He improves wonderfully with experience. His present defects are timidity and a lurking taint of partiality, amounting to positive prejudice (in the vulgar sense) for the literature of the Puritans. I do not think, however, that he is at all aware of such prepossession. His taste is rather unexceptionable than positively good. He has not, perhaps, sufficient fire within himself to appreciate it in others. Nevertheless, he endeavors to do so, and in this endeavor is not inapt to take opinions at second hand—to adopt, I mean, the opinions of others. He is nervous, and a very trifling difficulty disconcerts him, without getting the better of a sort of dogged perseverance, which will make a thoroughly successful man of him in the end. He is (classically) well educated.

As a poet he has done better things than "Tecumseh," in whose length he has committed a radical and irreparable error, sufficient in itself to destroy a far better book. Some portions of it are truly poetical; very many portions belong to a high order of eloquence; it is invariably well versified, and has no glaring defects, but, upon the whole, is insufferably tedious. Some of the author's shorter compositions, published anonymously in his magazine, have afforded indications even of genius.

Mr. Colton is marked in his personal appearance. He is probably not more than thirty, but an air of constant thought (with a pair of spectacles) causes him to seem somewhat older. He is about five feet eight or nine in

height, and fairly proportioned—neither stout nor thin. His forehead is quite intellectual. His mouth has a peculiar expression difficult to describe. Hair light and generally in disorder. He converses fluently, and, upon the whole, well, but grandiloquently, and with a tone half tragical, half pulpital.

In character he is in the highest degree estimable, a most sincere, high-minded, and altogether honorable man. He is unmarried.

N. P. WILLIS.

Whatever may be thought of Mr. WILLIS' talents, there can be no doubt of the fact that, both as an author and as a man, he has made a good deal of noise in the world—at least for an American. His literary life, in especial, has been one continual *émeute;* but then his literary character has been modified or impelled in a very remarkable degree by his personal one. His success (for in point of fame, if of nothing else, he has certainly been successful) is to be attributed, one third to his mental ability and two thirds to his physical temperament—the latter goading him into the accomplishment of what the former merely gave him the means of accomplishing.

At a very early age Mr. Willis seems to have arrived at an understanding that, in a republic such as ours, the *mere* man of letters must ever be a cipher, and endeavored, accordingly, to unite the *éclat* of the *littérateur* with that

of the man of fashion or of society. He "pushed himself," went much into the world, made friends with the gentler sex, "delivered" poetical addresses, wrote "scriptural" poems, travelled, sought the intimacy of noted women, and got into quarrels with notorious men. All these things served his purpose—if, indeed, I am right in supposing that he had any purpose at all. It is quite probable that, as before hinted, he acted only in accordance with his physical temperament; but, be this as it may, his personal greatly advanced, if it did not altogether establish, his literary fame. I have often carefully considered whether, without the *physique* of which I speak, there is that in the absolute *morale* of Mr. Willis which would have earned him reputation as a man of letters, and my conclusion is, that he could not have failed to become noted in *some* degree under almost any circumstances, but that about two thirds (as above stated) of his appreciation by the public should be attributed to those *adventures* which grew immediately out of his animal constitution.

He received what is usually regarded as a "good education"—that is to say, he graduated at college; but his education, in the path he pursued, was worth to him, on account of his extraordinary *savoir faire*, fully twice as much as would have been its value in any common case. No man's knowledge is more available, no man has exhibited greater *tact* in the seemingly casual display of his wares. With *him*, at least, a little learning is no dangerous thing. He possessed at one time, I believe, the aver-

age quantum of American collegiate lore—"a little Latin and less Greek," a smattering of physical and metaphysical science, and (I should judge) a *very* little of the mathematics—but all this must be considered as mere *guess* on my part. Mr. Willis speaks French with some fluency, and Italian not quite so well.

Within the ordinary range of *belles-lettres* authorship, he has evinced much versatility. If called on to designate him by any general literary title, I might term him a magazinist—for his compositions have invariably the species of *effect*, with the brevity which the magazine demands. We may view him as a paragraphist, an essayist, or rather "sketcher," a tale writer, and a poet.

In the first capacity he fails. His points, however good, when deliberately wrought, are too *recherchés* to be put hurriedly before the public eye. Mr. W. has by no means the *readiness* which the editing a newspaper demands. He composes (as did Addison, and as do many of the most brilliant and seemingly *dashing* writers of the present day) with great labor and frequent erasure and interlineation. His MSS., in this regard, present a very singular appearance, and indicate the *vacillation* which is, perhaps, the leading trait of his character. A newspaper, too, in its longer articles—its "leaders"—very frequently demands augmentation, and here Mr. W. is remarkably out of his element. His exuberant *fancy* leads him over hedge and ditch—anywhere from the main road; and, besides, he is far too readily self-dispossessed. With time

at command, however, his great *tact* stands him instead of all argumentative power, and enables him to overthrow an antagonist without permitting the latter to see how he is overthrown. A fine example of this "management" is to be found in Mr. W.'s reply to a very inconsiderate attack upon his social standing, made by one of the editors of the New York *Courier and Inquirer*. I have always regarded this reply as the highest evidence of its author's ability, as a masterpiece of ingenuity, if not of absolute genius. The skill of the whole lay in this—that without troubling himself to refute the charges themselves, brought against him by Mr. Raymond, he put forth his strength in rendering them null, to all intents and purposes, by obliterating, incidentally and without letting his design be perceived, all *the impression* these charges were calculated to convey. But this reply can be called a newspaper article only on the ground of its having appeared in a newspaper.

As a writer of "sketches," properly so called, Mr. Willis is unequalled. Sketches—especially of society—are his *forte*, and they are so for no other reason than that they afford him the best opportunity of introducing the personal Willis—or, more distinctly, because this species of composition is most susceptible of impression from his personal character. The *degagé* tone of this kind of writing, too, best admits and encourages that *fancy* which Mr. W. possesses in the most extraordinary degree; it is in fancy that he reigns supreme; this, more than any one

other quality, and, indeed, more than all his other *literary* qualities combined, has made him what he is. It is this which gives him the originality, the freshness, the point, the piquancy, which appear to be the immediate, but which are, in fact, the mediate, sources of his popularity.*

* As, by metaphysicians and in ordinary discourse, the word *fancy* is used with very little determinateness of meaning, I may be pardoned for repeating here what I have elsewhere said on this topic. I shall thus be saved much misapprehension in regard to the term—one which will necessarily be often employed in the course of this series.

"Fancy," says the author of "Aids to Reflection" (who aided reflection to much better purpose in his "Genevieve"),—"fancy combines—imagination creates." This was intended and has been received as a distinction, but it is a distinction without a difference—without a difference even of degree. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination, and neither at all. Novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can imagine nothing which does not really exist; if it could, it would create not only ideally but substantially, as do the thoughts of God. It may be said, "We imagine a griffin, yet a griffin does not exist." Not the griffin, certainly, but its component parts. It is no more than a collation of known limbs, features, qualities. Thus with all which claims to be new, which appears to be a creation of the intellect—all is re-soluble into the old. The wildest effort of the mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

Imagination, fancy, fantasy, and humor, have in common the elements combination and novelty. The imagination is the first artist of the four. From novel arrangements of old forms which present themselves to it, it selects such only as are harmonious; the result, of course, is *beauty* itself—using the word in its most extended sense and as inclusive of the sublime. The pure imagination chooses, *from either beauty or deformity*, only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined; the compound, as a general rule, partaking in character of sublimity or beauty in the ratio of the respective sublimity or beauty of the things combined, which are themselves still to be considered as atomic—that is to say, as previous combinations. But, as often analogously happens in physical chemistry, so not unfrequently does it occur in this chemistry of the intellect, that the admixture of two elements will result in a something that shall have nothing of the quality of one of them—or even nothing of the qualities of either. The range of imagination is thus unlimited. Its materials extend throughout the universe. Even

In *tales* (written with deliberation for the magazines) he has shown greater *constructiveness* than I should have given him credit for had I not read his compositions of this order—for in this faculty all his other works indicate a singular deficiency. The chief charm even of these tales, however, is still referable to *fancy*.

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out of deformities it fabricates that *beauty* which is at once its sole object and its inevitable test. But, in general, the richness of the matters combined, the facility of discovering combinable novelties worth combining, and *the absolute "chemical combination"* of the completed mass, are the particulars to be regarded in our estimate of imagination. It is this thorough harmony of an imaginative work which so often causes it to be undervalued by the undiscriminating, through the character of *obviousness* which is superinduced. We are apt to find ourselves asking *why it is that these combinations have never been imagined before.*

Now, when this question *does not occur*, when the harmony of the combination is comparatively neglected, and when, in addition to the element of novelty, there is introduced the sub-element of *unexpectedness*—when, for example, matters are brought into combination which not only have never been combined, but whose combination strikes us as a *difficulty happily overcome*, the result then appertains to the fancy, and is, to the majority of mankind, more grateful than the purely harmonious one—although, absolutely, it is less beautiful (or grand) for the reason that *it is* less harmonious.

Carrying its errors into excess—for, however enticing, they *are* errors still, or nature lies—fancy is at length found infringing upon the province of fantasy. The votaries of this latter delight not only in novelty and unexpectedness of combination, but in the *avoidance* of proportion. The result is, therefore, abnormal, and, to a healthy mind, affords less of pleasure through its novelty than of pain through its incoherence. When, proceeding a step farther, however, fancy seeks not merely disproportionate but incongruous or antagonistic elements, the effect is rendered more pleasurable by its greater positiveness, there is a merry effort of truth to shake from her that which is no property of hers, and we laugh outright in recognizing humor.

The four faculties in question seem to me all of their class; but when either fancy or humor is expressed to gain an end, is pointed at a purpose—whenever either becomes objective in place of subjective, then it becomes also, pure wit or sarcasm, just as the purpose is benevolent or malevolent.

As a poet, Mr. Willis is not entitled, I think, to so high a rank as he may justly claim through his prose; and this for the reason that, although fancy is not inconsistent with any of the demands of those classes of prose composition which he has attempted, and, indeed, is a vital element of most of them, still it is at war (as will be understood from what I have said in the foot-note) with that purity and perfection of *beauty* which are the soul of the poem proper. I wish to be understood as saying this *generally* of our author's poems. In some instances, seeming to *feel* the truth of my proposition (that fancy should have no place in the loftier poesy), he has denied it a place, as in "Melanie," and his Scriptural pieces; but, unfortunately, he has been unable to supply the void with the true imagination, and these poems consequently are deficient in vigor, in *stamen*. The Scriptural pieces are quite "correct," as the French have it, and are much admired by a certain set of readers, who judge of a poem, not by its effect on themselves, but by the effect which they imagine it *might* have upon themselves were they not unhappily soulless, and by the effect which they take it for granted it *does* have upon others. It cannot be denied, however, that these pieces are, in general, tame, or indebted for what force they possess to the Scriptural passages of which they are merely paraphrastic. I quote what, in my own opinion, and in that of nearly all my friends, is really the truest poem ever written by Mr. Willis,

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'T was near the twilight tide,
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride—
Alone walked she, yet viewlessly
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And honor charmed the air,
And all astir looked kind on her
And called her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare,
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo.
Ah, honored well are charms to sell
When priests the selling do!

Now, walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale,
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail—
'Twixt want and scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray—
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way;
And the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed alway.

There is about this little poem (evidently written in haste and through impulse) a true *imagination*. Its grace, dignity, and pathos are impressive, and there is more in it of earnestness, of soul, than in any thing I have seen

from the pen of its author. His compositions, in general, have a taint of worldliness, of insincerity. The identical rhyme in the last stanza is very noticeable, and the whole *finale* is feeble. It would be improved by making the last two lines precede the first two of the stanza.

In classifying Mr. W.'s writings I did not think it worth while to speak of him as a dramatist, because, although he has written plays, what they have of merit is altogether in their character of poem. Of his "Bianca Visconti" I have little to say;—it deserved to fail, and did, although it abounded in *eloquent* passages. "Tortesa" abounded in the same, but had a great many dramatic *points* well calculated to tell with a conventional audience. Its characters, with the exception of Tomaso, a drunken buffoon, had no character at all, and the *plot* was a tissue of absurdities, inconsequences, and inconsistencies; yet I cannot help thinking it, upon the whole, the best play ever written by an American.

Mr. Willis has made very few attempts at criticism, and those few (chiefly newspaper articles) have not impressed me with a high idea of his analytic abilities, although with a *very* high idea of his taste and discrimination.

His *style* proper may be called extravagant, *bizarre*, pointed, epigrammatic without being antithetical (this is very rarely the case), but, through all its whimsicalities, graceful, classic, and *accurate*. He is very seldom to be caught tripping in the minor morals. His English is *correct;* his most outrageous imagery is, at all events, unmixed.

Mr. Willis' career has naturally made him enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame; and these his personal manner (a little tinctured with reserve, *brusquerie*, or even haughtiness) is by no means adapted to conciliate. He has innumerable warm friends, however, and is himself a warm friend. He is impulsive, generous, bold, impetuous, vacillating, irregularly energetic—apt to be hurried into error, but incapable of deliberate wrong.

He is yet young, and, without being handsome, in the ordinary sense, is a remarkably well-looking man. In height, he is perhaps, five feet eleven, and justly proportioned. His figure is put in the best light by the ease and assured grace of his carriage. His whole person and personal demeanor bear about them the traces of "good society." His face is somewhat too full, or rather heavy, in its lower portions. Neither his nose nor his forehead can be defended; the latter would puzzle phrenology. His eyes are a dull bluish-gray, and small. His hair is of a rich brown, curling naturally and luxuriantly. His mouth is well cut; the teeth fine; the expression of the smile intellectual and winning. He converses little, *well* rather than fluently, and in a subdued tone. The portrait of him published about three years ago in *Graham's Magazine*, conveys by no means so true an idea of the man as does the sketch (by Lawrence) inserted as frontispiece to a late collection of his poems.

WILLIAM M. GILLESPIE.

Mr. WILLIAM M. GILLESPIE aided Mr. Park Benjamin, I believe, some years ago, in the editorial conduct of *The New World*, and has been otherwise connected with the periodical press of New York. He is more favorably known, however, as the author of a neat volume entitled "Rome as Seen by a New Yorker,"—a good title to a good book. The endeavor to convey Rome only by those impressions which would naturally be made upon an American, gives the work a certain air of originality—the rarest of all qualities in descriptions of the Eternal City. The style is pure and sparkling, although occasionally flippant and *dilletantesque*. The love of remark is much in the usual way—*selon les règles*—never very exceptionable, and never very profound.

Mr. Gillespie is not unaccomplished, converses readily on many topics, has some knowledge of Italian, French, and, I believe, of the classical tongues, with such proficiency in the mathematics as has obtained for him a professorship of civil engineering at Union College, Schenectady.

In character he has much general amiability, is warm-hearted, excitable, nervous. His address is somewhat awkward, but "insinuating" from its warmth and vivacity. Speaks continuously and rapidly, with a lisp which, at times, is by no means unpleasing; is fidgety, and never knows how to sit or to stand, or what to do with his hands and feet, or his hat. In the street walks irregu-

larly, mutters to himself, and, in general, appears in a state of profound abstraction.

In person he is about five feet seven inches high, neither stout nor thin, angularly proportioned; eyes large and dark hazel, hair dark and curling, an ill-formed nose, fine teeth, and a smile of peculiar sweetness; nothing remarkable about the forehead. The general expression of the countenance when in repose is rather unprepossessing, but animation very much alters its character. He is probably thirty years of age—unmarried.

CHARLES F. BRIGGS.

Mr. BRIGGS is better known as Harry Franco, *a nom de plume* assumed since the publication, in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, of his series of papers called "Adventures of Harry Franco." He also wrote for the *Knickerbocker* some articles entitled "The Haunted Merchant," which have been printed since as a novel, and from time to time subsequently has been a contributor to that journal. The two productions just mentioned have some merit. They depend for their effect upon the relation in a straightforward manner, just as one would talk, of the most commonplace events—a kind of writing which, to ordinary, and especially to indolent intellects, has a very observable charm. To cultivated or to active minds it is in an equal degree distasteful, even when claiming the merit of originality. Mr. Briggs' manner, however, is an

obvious imitation of Smollett, and, as usual with all imitation, produces an unfavorable impression upon those conversant with the original. It is a common failing, also, with imitators, to out-Herod Herod in aping the peculiarities of the model, and too frequently the faults are more pertinaciously exaggerated than the merits. Thus, the author of "Harry Franco" carries the simplicity of Smollett sometimes to insipidity, and his picturesque low life is made to degenerate into sheer vulgarity.

If Mr. Briggs has a *forte*, it is a Flemish fidelity that omits nothing, whether agreeable or disagreeable; but I cannot call this *forte* a virtue. He has also some humor, but nothing of an original character. Occasionally he has written good things. A magazine article, called "Dobbs and his Cantelope," was quite easy and clever in its way; but the way is necessarily a small one. And I ought not to pass over without some allusion to it, his sacred novel of "Tom Pepper." As a novel, it really has not the slightest pretensions. To a genuine artist in literature, he is as Plumbe to Sully. Plumbe's daguerrotypes have more fidelity than any portrait ever put on canvas, and so Briggs' sketches of E. A. Duyckinck (Tibbings) and the author of Puffer Hopkins (Ferocious) are as life-like as any portraits in words that have ever been drawn. But the subjects are little and mean, pretending and vulgar. Mr. Briggs would not succeed in delineating a gentleman. And some letters of his in Hiram Fuller's paper—perhaps for the reason that they run through a

desert of stupidity—some letters of his, I say, under the apt signature of "Ferdinand Mendoza Pinto," are decidedly clever as examples of caricature—absurd, of course, but sharply absurd, so that, with a knowledge of their design, one could hardly avoid occasional laughter. I once thought Mr. Briggs could cause laughter only by his efforts at a serious kind of writing.

In connection with Mr. John Bisco, he was the originator of the late *Broadway Journal*,—my editorial association with that work not having commenced until the sixth or seventh number, although I wrote for it occasionally from the first. Among the principal papers contributed by Mr. B., were those discussing the paintings at the preceding exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts in New York. I may be permitted to say, that there was scarcely a point in his whole series of criticisms on this subject at which I did not radically disagree with him. Whatever taste he has in art is, like his taste in letters, Flemish. There is a portrait painter for whom he has an unlimited admiration. The unfortunate gentleman is Mr. Page.

Mr. Briggs is about five feet six inches in height, somewhat slightly framed, with a sharp, thin face, narrow forehead, nose sufficiently prominent, mouth rather pleasant in expression, eyes not so good, gray and small, although occasionally brilliant. In dress he is apt to affect the artist, felicitating himself especially upon his personal acquaintance with artists and his general connoisseurship.

He walks with a quick, nervous step. His address is quite good, frank and insinuating. His conversation has now and then the merit of humor, and more frequently of a smartness, allied to wit, but he has a perfect mania for contradiction, and it is sometimes impossible to utter an uninterrupted sentence in his hearing. He has much warmth of feeling, and is not a person to be disliked, although very apt to irritate and annoy. Two of his most marked characteristics are vacillation of purpose and a passion for being mysterious. He has, apparently, travelled; has some knowledge of French; has been engaged in a variety of employments; and now, I believe, occupies a lawyer's office in Nassau street, He is from Cape Cod or Nantucket, is married, and is the centre of a little circle of rather intellectual people, of which the Kirklands, Lowell, and some other notabilities are honorary members. He goes little into general society, and seems about forty years of age.

WILLIAM KIRKLAND.

Mr. WILLIAM KIRKLAND—husband of the author of "A New Home"—has written much for the magazines, but has made no collection of his works. A series of "Letters from Abroad" have been among his most popular compositions. He was in Europe for some time, and is well acquainted with the French language and literature, as also with the German. He aided Dr. Turner in the

late translation of Von Raumer's "America," published by the Langleys. One of his best magazine papers appeared in the *Columbian*—a review of the London foreign quarterly for April, 1844. The arrogance, ignorance, and self-glorification of the quarterly, with its gross injustice toward every thing un-British, were severely and palpably exposed, and its narrow malignity shown to be especially *mal-a-propos* in a journal exclusively devoted to foreign concerns, and therefore presumably imbued with something of a cosmopolitan spirit. An article on "English and American Monthlies" in *Godey's Magazine* and one entitled "Our English Visitors," in the *Columbian*, have also been extensively read and admired. A valuable essay on "The Tyranny of Public Opinion in the United States" (published in the *Columbian* for December, 1845), demonstrates the truth of Jefferson's assertion, that in this country, which has set the world an example of physical liberty, the inquisition of popular sentiment overrules in practice the freedom asserted in theory by the laws. "The West, the Paradise of the Poor," and "The United States Census for 1830," the former in the *Democratic Review*, the latter in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, with sundry essays in the daily papers, complete the list of Mr. Kirkland's works. It will be seen that he has written little, but that little is entitled to respect for its simplicity, and the evidence which it affords of scholarship and diligent research. Whatever Mr. Kirkland does is done carefully. He is occasionally very caustic, but

seldom without cause. His style is vigorous, precise, and, notwithstanding his foreign acquirements, free from idiomatic peculiarities.

Mr. Kirkland is beloved by all who know him; in character mild, unassuming, benevolent, yet not without becoming energy at times; in person rather short and slight; features indistinctive; converses well and zealously, although his hearing is defective.

JOHN W. FRANCIS.

Doctor FRANCIS, although by no means a *litterateur*, cannot well be omitted in an account of the New York *literati*. In his capacity of physician and medical lecturer, he is far too well known to need comment. He was the pupil, friend, and partner of Hossack—the pupil of Abernethy—connected in some manner with every thing that has been well said or done medicinally in America. As a medical essayist he has always commanded the highest respect and attention. Among the *points* he has made at various times, I may mention his anatomy of drunkenness, his views of the Asiatic cholera, his analysis of the Avon waters of the state, his establishment of the comparative immunity of the constitution from a second attack of yellow fever, and his pathological propositions on the changes wrought in the system by specific poisons through their assimilation—propositions remarkably sustained and enforced by recent discoveries of Liebig.

In unprofessional letters Doctor Francis has also accomplished much, although necessarily in a discursive manner. His biography of Chancellor Livingston, his horticultural discourse, his discourse at the opening of the new hall of the New York Lyceum of Natural History, are (each in its way) models of fine writing just sufficiently toned down by an indomitable common-sense. I had nearly forgotten to mention his admirable sketch of the personal associations of Bishop Berkley, of Newport.

Doctor Francis is one of the old spirits of the New York Historical Society. His philanthrophy, his active, untiring beneficence, will for ever render his name a household word among the truly Christian of heart. His professional services and his purse are always at the command of the needy; few of our wealthiest men have ever contributed to the relief of distress so bountifully—none certainly with greater readiness or with warmer sympathy.

His person and manner are richly peculiar. He is short and stout, probably five feet eight in height, limbs of great muscularity and strength, the whole frame indicating prodigious vitality and energy—the latter is, in fact, the leading trait in his character. His head is large, massive—the features in keeping; complexion dark florid; eyes piercingly bright; mouth exceedingly mobile and expressive; hair gray, and worn in matted locks about the neck and shoulders; eyebrows to correspond, jagged and ponderous. His age is about fifty-eight. His general appearance is such as to arrest attention.

His address is the most genial that can be conceived, its *bonhomie* irresistible. He speaks in a loud, clear, hearty tone, dogmatically, with his head thrown back and his chest out; never waits for an introduction to anybody; slaps a perfect stranger on the back and calls him "Doctor" or "Learned Theban"; pats every lady on the head, and (if she be pretty and *petite*) designates her by some such title as "My Pocket Edition of the Lives of the Saints." His conversation proper is a sort of Roman punch made up of tragedy, comedy, and the broadest of all possible farce. He has a natural felicitous flow of talk, always overswelling its boundaries and sweeping every thing before it, right and left. He is very earnest, intense, emphatic; thumps the table with his fist; shocks the nerves of the ladies. His *forte*, after all, is humor, the richest conceivable—a compound of Swift, Rabelais, and the clown in the pantomime. He is married.

ANNA CORA MOWATT.

Mrs. MOWATT is in some respects a remarkable woman, and has undoubtedly wrought a deeper impression upon *the public* than any one of her sex in America.

She became first known through her recitations. To these she drew large and discriminating audiences in Boston, New York, and elsewhere to the north and east. Her subjects were much in the usual way of these exhibitions, including comic as well as serious pieces, chiefly in

verse. In her selections she evinced no *very* refined taste, but was probably influenced by the elocutionary rather than by the literary value of her *programmes*. She read well; her voice was melodious; her youth and general appearance excited interest, but, upon the whole, she produced no great effect, and the enterprise may be termed unsuccessful, although the press, as is its wont, spoke in the most sonorous tone of her success.

It was during these recitations that her name, prefixed to occasional tales, sketches, and brief poems in the magazines, first attracted an attention that, but for the recitations, it might not have attracted.

Her sketches and tales may be said to be *cleverly* written. They are lively, easy, *conventional*, scintillating with a species of sarcastic wit, which might be termed good were it in any respect original. In point of style—that is to say, of mere English, they are very respectable. One of the best of her prose pieces is entitled "Ennui and its Antidote," published in the *Columbian Magazine* for June, 1845. The subject, however, is an exceedingly hackneyed one.

In looking carefully over her poems, I find no one entitled to commendation as a whole; in very few of them do I observe even noticeable passages, and I confess that I am surprised and disappointed at this result of my inquiry; nor can I make up my mind that there is not much latent poetical power in Mrs. Mowatt. From some lines addressed to Isabel M——, I copy the opening stanza as

the most favorable specimen which I have seen of her verse :

Forever vanished from thy cheek
Is life's unfolding rose ;
Forever quenched the flashing smile
That conscious beauty knows !
Thine orbs are lustrous with a light
Which ne'er illumes the eye
Till heaven is bursting on the sight
And earth is fleeting by.

In this there is much force, and the idea in the concluding quatrain is so well *put* as to have the air of originality. Indeed, I am not sure that the thought of the last two lines is not original ;—at all events it is exceedingly *natural* and impressive. I say "*natural*," because, in any imagined ascent from the orb we inhabit, when heaven should "burst on the sight,"—in other words, when the attraction of the planet should be superseded by that of another sphere, then instantly would the "earth" have the appearance of "fleeting by." The versification, also, is much better here than is usual with the poetess. In general she is rough, through excess of harsh consonants. The whole poem is of higher merit than any which I can find with her name attached ; but there is little of the spirit of poesy in any thing she writes. She evinces more feeling than ideality.

Her first decided success was with her comedy, "Fashion," although much of this success itself is referable to the interest felt in her as a beautiful woman and an authoress.

The play is not without merit. It may be commended especially for its simplicity of plot. What the Spanish playwrights mean by dramas of *intrigue*, are the worst acting dramas in the world; the intellect of an audience can never safely be fatigued by complexity. The necessity for verbose explanation, however, on the part of Trueman, at the close of the play, is in this regard a serious defect. A *dénouement* should in all cases be taken up with *action*—with nothing else. Whatever cannot be explained by such action should be communicated at the opening of the story.

In the plot, however estimable for simplicity, there is of course not a particle of originality of invention. Had it, indeed, been designed as a burlesque upon the arrant conventionality of stage incidents in general, it might have been received as a palpable hit. There is not an event, a character, a jest, which is not a well-understood thing, a matter of course, a stage-property time out of mind. The general tone is adopted from "The School for Scandal," to which, indeed, the whole composition bears just such an affinity as the shell of a locust to the locust that tenants it—as the spectrum of a Congreve rocket to the Congreve rocket itself. In the *management* of her imitation, nevertheless, Mrs. Mowatt has, I think, evinced a sense of theatrical effect or point which may lead her, at no very distant day, to compose an exceedingly *taking*, although it can never much aid her in composing a very meritorious, drama. "Fashion," in a word,

owes what it had of success to its being the work of a lovely woman who had already excited interest, and to the very commonplaceness or spirit of conventionality which rendered it readily comprehensible and appreciable by the public proper. It was much indebted, too, to the carpets, the ottomans, the chandeliers and the conservatories, which gained so decided a popularity for that despicable mass of inanity, the "London Assurance" of Boucicault.

Since "Fashion," Mrs. Mowatt has published one or two brief novels in pamphlet form, but they have no particular merit, although they afford glimpses (I cannot help thinking) of a genius as yet unrevealed, except in her capacity of actress.

In this capacity, if she be but true to herself, she will assuredly win a very enviable distinction. She has done well, wonderfully well, both in tragedy and comedy; but if she knew her own strength, she would confine herself nearly altogether to the depicting (in letters not less than on the stage) the more gentle sentiments and the most profound passions. Her sympathy with the latter is evidently intense. In the utterance of the truly generous, of the really noble, of the unaffectedly passionate, we see her bosom heave, her cheek grow pale, her limbs tremble, her lip quiver, and nature's own tear rush impetuously to the eye. It is this freshness of the heart which will provide for her the greenest laurels. It is this enthusiasm, this well of deep feeling, which should be made to prove for her an inexhaustible source of fame. As an actress,

it is to her a mine of wealth worth all the dawdling *instruction* in the world. Mrs. Mowatt, on her first appearance as Pauline, was quite as able to give lessons in stage *routine* to any actor or actress in America, as was any actor or actress to give lessons to her. *Now*, at least, she should throw all "support" to the winds, trust proudly to her own sense of art, her own rich and natural elocution, her beauty, which is unusual, her grace, which is queenly, and be assured that these qualities, as she *now* possesses them, are all sufficient to render her a great actress, when considered simply as the means by which the end of natural acting is to be attained, as the mere instruments by which she may effectively and unimpededly lay bare to the audience the movements of her own passionate heart.

Indeed, the great charm of her manner is its naturalness. She looks, speaks, and moves, with a well-controlled impulsiveness, as different as can be conceived from the customary rant and cant, the hack conventionality of the stage. Her voice is rich and voluminous, and although by no means powerful, is so well managed as to seem so. Her utterance is singularly distinct, its sole blemish being an occasional Anglicism of accent, adopted probably from her instructor, Mr. Crisp. Her reading could scarcely be improved. Her action is distinguished by an ease and self-possession which would do credit to a veteran. Her step is the perfection of grace. Often have I watched her for hours with the closest scrutiny, yet

never for an instant did I observe her in an attitude of the least awkwardness or even constraint, while many of her seemingly impulsive gestures spoke in loud terms of the woman of genius, of the poet imbued with the profoundest sentiment of the beautiful in motion.

Her figure is slight, even fragile. Her face is a remarkably fine one, and of that precise character best adapted to the stage. The forehead is, perhaps, the least prepossessing feature, although it is by no means an unintellectual one. Hair light auburn, in rich profusion, and always arranged with exquisite taste. The eyes are gray, brilliant, and expressive, without being full. The nose is well formed, with the Roman curve, and indicative of energy. This quality is also shown in the somewhat excessive prominence of the chin. The mouth is large, with brilliant and even teeth and flexible lips, capable of the most instantaneous and effective variation of expression. A more radiantly beautiful smile it is quite impossible to conceive.

GEORGE B. CHEEVER.

The Reverend GEORGE B. CHEEVER created at one time something of an excitement by the publication of a little *brochure* entitled "Deacon Giles' Distillery." He is much better known, however, as the editor of "The Commonplace Book of American Poetry," a work which has at least the merit of not belying its title, and *is* exceedingly commonplace. I am ashamed to say that for several

years this compilation afforded to Europeans the only material from which it was possible to form an estimate of the poetical ability of Americans. The selections appear to me exceedingly injudicious, and have all a marked leaning to the didactic. Dr. Cheever is not without a certain sort of negative ability as critic, but works of this character should be undertaken by poets or not at all. The verses which I have seen attributed to *him* are undeniably *médiocres*.

His principal publications, in addition to those mentioned above, are "God's Hand in America," "Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Mont Blanc," "Wanderings of a Pilgrim under the Shadow of Jungfrau," and, lately, a "Defence of Capital Punishment." This "Defence" is at many points well reasoned, and as a clear *resumé* of all that has been already said on its own side of the question, may be considered as commendable. Its premises, however, (as well as those of all reasoners *pro* or *con* on this vexed topic,) are admitted only very partially by the world at large—a fact of which the author affects to be ignorant. Neither does he make the slightest attempt at bringing forward one novel argument. Any man of ordinary invention might have adduced and maintained a dozen.

The two series of "Wanderings" are, perhaps, the best works of their writer. They are what is called "eloquent"; a little too much in that way, perhaps, but nevertheless entertaining.

CHARLES ANTHON.

Doctor CHARLES ANTHON is the well-known Jay-Professor of the Greek and Latin languages in Columbia College, New York, and Rector of the Grammar School. If not absolutely the best, he is at least generally considered the best, classicist in America. In England, and in Europe at large, his scholastic acquirements are more sincerely respected than those of any of our countrymen. His additions to Lemprière are there justly regarded as evincing a nice perception of method, and accurate as well as extensive erudition, but his "Classical Dictionary" has superseded the work of the Frenchman altogether. Most of Professor Anthon's publications have been adopted as text-books at Oxford and Cambridge—an honor to be properly understood only by those acquainted with the many high requisites for attaining it. As a commentator (if not exactly as a critic) he may rank with any of his day, and has evinced powers very unusual in men who devote their lives to classical lore. His accuracy is very remarkable; in this particular he is always to be relied upon. The trait manifests itself even in his MS., which is a model of neatness and symmetry, exceeding in these respects any thing of the kind with which I am acquainted. It is somewhat *too* neat, perhaps, and *too* regular, as well as diminutive, to be called beautiful; it might be mistaken at any time, however, for very elaborate copperplate engraving.

But his chirography, although fully in keeping, so far

as precision is concerned, with his mental character, is, in its entire freedom from flourish or superfluity, as much *out* of keeping with his verbal style. In his notes to the classics he is singularly Ciceronian—if, indeed, not positively Johnsonese.

An attempt was made not long ago to prepossess the public against his "Classical Dictionary," the most important of his works, by getting up a hue and cry of plagiarism—in the case of all similar books the most preposterous accusation in the world, although, from its very preposterousness, one not easily rebutted. Obviously, the design in any such compilation is, in the first place, to make a *useful school-book* or book of reference, and the scholar who should be weak enough to neglect this indispensable point for the mere purpose of winning credit with a few bookish men for originality, would deserve to be dubbed, by the public at least, a dunce. There are very few points of classical scholarship which are not the common property of "the learned" throughout the world, and in composing any book of reference recourse is unscrupulously and even necessarily had in all cases to similar books which have preceded. In availing themselves of these latter, however, it is the practice of quacks to paraphrase page after page, rearranging the order of paragraphs, making a slight alteration in point of fact here and there, but preserving the spirit of the whole, its information, erudition, etc., etc., while every thing is so completely *re-written* as to leave no room for a direct charge

of plagiarism; and this is considered and lauded as originality. Now, he who, in availing himself of the labors of his predecessors (and it is clear that all scholars *must* avail themselves of such labors)—he who shall copy *verbatim* the passages to be desired, without attempt at palming off their spirit as original with himself, is certainly no plagiarist, even if he fail to make *direct* acknowledgment of indebtedness—is unquestionably *less* of the plagiarist than the disingenuous and contemptible quack who wriggles himself, as above explained, into a reputation for originality, a reputation quite out of place in a case of this kind—the public, of course, never caring a straw whether he be original or not. These attacks upon the New York professor are to be attributed to a *clique* of pedants in and about Boston, gentlemen envious of his success, and whose own compilations are noticeable only for the singular patience and ingenuity with which their dovetailing chicanery is concealed from the *public* eye.

Doctor Anthon is, perhaps, forty-eight years of age; about five feet eight inches in height; rather stout; fair complexion; hair light and inclined to curl; forehead remarkably broad and high; eye gray, clear, and penetrating; mouth well-formed, with excellent teeth—the lips having great flexibility, and consequent power of expression; the smile particularly pleasing. His address in general is bold, frank, cordial, full of *bonhomie*. His whole air is *distingué* in the best understanding of the

term—that is to say, he would impress any one at first sight with the idea of his being no ordinary man. He has qualities, indeed, which would have assured him eminent success in almost any pursuit; and there are times in which his friends are half disposed to regret his exclusive devotion to classical literature. He was one of the originators of the late *New York Review*, his associates in the conduct and proprietorship being Doctor F. L. Hawks and Professor R. C. Henry. By far the most valuable papers, however, were those of Doctor A.

RALPH HOYT.

The Reverend RALPH HOYT is known chiefly—at least to the world of letters—by "The Chaunt of Life and other Poems, with Sketches and Essays." The publication of this work, however, was never *completed*, only a portion of the poems having appeared, and none of the essays or sketches. It is hoped that we shall yet have these latter.

Of the poems issued, one, entitled "Old," had so many peculiar excellences that I copied the whole of it, although quite long, in *The Broadway Journal*. It will remind every reader of Durand's fine picture, "An Old Man's Recollections," although between poem and painting there is no more than a very admissible similarity.

I quote a stanza from "Old" (the opening one) by way of bringing the piece to the remembrance of any who may have forgotten it.

By the wayside, on a mossy stone,
Sat a hoary pilgrim sadly musing;
Oft I marked him sitting there alone,
All the landscape like a page perusing;
Poor unknown,
By the wayside, on a mossy stone.

The quaintness aimed at here is, so far as a single stanza is concerned, to be defended as a legitimate effect, conferring high pleasure on a numerous and cultivated class of minds. Mr. Hoyt, however, in his continuous and uniform repetition of the first line in the last of each stanza of twenty-five, has by much exceeded the proper limits of the quaint and impinged upon the ludicrous. The poem, nevertheless, abounds in lofty merit, and has, in especial, some passages of rich imagination and exquisite pathos. For example—

Seemed it pitiful he should sit there,
No one sympathizing, no one heeding,
None to love him for his thin gray hair.

One sweet spirit broke the silent spell—
Ah, to me her name was always Heaven!
She besought him all his grief to tell—
(I was then thirteen and she eleven—)
Isabel!
One sweet spirit broke the silent spell.

"Angel," said he, sadly, "I am old;
Earthly hope no longer hath a morrow;
Why I sit here thou shalt soon be told"—
(Then his eye betrayed a pearl of sorrow—
Down it rolled—)
"Angel," said he, sadly, "*I am old!*"

It must be confessed that some portions of "Old"

(which is by far the best of the collection) remind us forcibly of the "Old Man" of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

"Pröemus" is the concluding poem of the volume, and itself concludes with an exceedingly vigorous stanza, putting me not a little in mind of Campbell in his best days.

O'er all the silent sky
A dark and scowling frown—
But darker scowled each eye
When all resolved to die—
When (night of dread renown!)
A thousand stars went down.

Mr. Hoyt is about forty years of age, of the medium height, pale complexion, dark hair and eyes. His countenance expresses sensibility and benevolence. He converses slowly and with perfect deliberation. He is married.

GULIAN C. VERPLANCK.

Mr. VERPLANCK has acquired reputation—at least his literary reputation—less from what he has done than from what he has given indication of ability to do. His best if not his principal works, have been addresses, orations, and contributions to the reviews. His scholarship is more than respectable, and his taste and acumen are not to be disputed.

His legal acquirements, it is admitted, are very considerable. When in Congress he was noted as the most industrious man in that assembly, and acted as a walking register or volume of reference, ever at the service of that

class of legislators who are too lofty-minded to burden their memories with mere business particulars or matters of fact. Of late years the energy of his character appears to have abated, and many of his friends go so far as to accuse him of indolence.

His family is quite influential—one of the few old Dutch ones retaining their social position.

Mr. Verplanck is short in stature, not more than five feet five inches in height, and compactly or stoutly built. The head is square, massive, and covered with thick, bushy, and grizzly hair; the cheeks are ruddy; lips red and full, indicating a relish for good cheer; nose short and straight; eyebrows much arched; eyes dark blue, with what seems, to a casual glance, a sleepy expression—but they gather light and fire as we examine them.

He must be sixty, but a vigorous constitution gives promise of a ripe and healthful old age. He is active; walks firmly, with a short, quick step. His manner is affable, or (more accurately) sociable. He converses well, although with no great fluency, and has his hobbies of talk; is especially fond of old English literature. Altogether, his person, intellect, tastes, and general peculiarities, bear a very striking resemblance to those of the late Nicholas Biddle.

FREEMAN HUNT.

Mr. HUNT is editor and proprietor of the well-known *Merchants' Magazine*, one of the most useful of our

monthly journals, and decidedly the best "property" of any work of its class. In its establishment he evinced many remarkable traits of character. He was entirely without means, and even much in debt, and otherwise embarrassed, when by one of those intuitive perceptions which belong only to genius, but which are usually attributed to "good luck," the "happy" idea entered his head of getting up a magazine devoted to the interests of the influential class of merchants. The chief happiness of this idea, however, (which no doubt had been entertained and discarded by a hundred projectors before Mr. H.,) consisted in the method by which he proposed to carry it into operation. Neglecting the hackneyed modes of advertising largely, circulating flashly prospectuses and sending out numerous "agents," who, in general, merely serve the purpose of boring people into a very temporary support of the work in whose behalf they are employed, he took the whole matter resolutely into his own hands; called personally, in the first place, upon his immediate mercantile friends; explained to them frankly and succinctly, his object; put the value and necessity of the contemplated publication in the best light—as he well knew how to do,—and in this manner obtained to head his subscription list a good many of the most eminent business men in New York. Armed with their names and with recommendatory letters from many of them, he now pushed on to the other chief cities of the Union, and thus, in less time than is taken by ordinary men to make a

preparatory flourish of trumpets, succeeded in building up for himself a permanent fortune, and for the public a journal of immense interest and value. In the whole proceeding he evinced a tact, a knowledge of mankind, and a self-dependence which are the staple of even greater achievements than the establishment of a five-dollar magazine. In the subsequent conduct of the work he gave evidence of equal ability. Having without aid put the magazine upon a satisfactory footing as regards its circulation, he also without aid undertook its editorial and business conduct—from the first germ of the conception to the present moment having kept the whole undertaking within his own hands. His subscribers and regular contributors are now among the most intelligent and influential in America; the journal is regarded as absolute authority in mercantile matters, circulates extensively not only in this country, but in Europe, and even in regions more remote, affording its worthy and enterprising projector a large income, which no one knows better than himself how to put to good use.

The strong points, the marked peculiarities of Mr. Hunt could not have failed in arresting the attention of all observers of character; and Mr. Willis in especial has made him the subject of repeated comment. I copy what follows from the *New York Mirror:*

Hunt has been glorified in the *Hong-Kong Gazette*, is regularly complimented by the English mercantile authorities, has every bank in the world for an eager subscriber, every consul,

every ship owner and navigator; is filed away as authority in every library, and thought of in half the countries of the world as early as No. 3 in their enumeration of distinguished Americans, yet who seeks to do him honor in the city he does honor to? The *Merchants' Magazine*, though a prodigy of perseverance and industry, is not an accidental development of Hunt's energies. He has always been singularly sagacious and original in devising new works and good ones. He was the founder of the first *Ladies' Magazine*,* of the first children's periodical; he started the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, compiled the best-known collection of American anecdotes, and is an indefatigable writer—the author, among other things of "Letters About the Hudson."

Hunt was a playfellow of ours in round-jacket days, and we have always looked at him with a reminiscent interest. His luminous, eager eyes, as he goes along the street, keenly bent on his errand, would impress any observer with an idea of his genius and determination, and we think it quite time his earnest head was in the engraver's hand and his daily passing by a mark for the *digito monstrari*. Few more worthy or more valuable citizens are among us.

Much of Mr. Hunt's character is included in what I have already said and quoted. He is "earnest," "eager," combining in a very singular manner general coolness and occasional excitability. He is a true friend, and the enemy of no man. His heart is full of the warmest sympa-

* At this point Mr. Willis is, perhaps, in error.

thies and charities. No one in New York is more universally popular.

He is about five feet eight inches in height, well proportioned; complexion dark-florid; forehead capacious; chin massive and projecting, indicative (according to Lavater and general experience) of that energy which is, in fact, the chief point of his character; hair light brown, very fine, of a web-like texture, worn long and floating about the face; eyes of wonderful brilliancy and intensity of expression; the whole countenance beaming with sensibility and intelligence. He is married and about thirty-eight years of age.

PIERO MARONCELLI.

During his twelve years' imprisonment, MARONCELLI composed a number of poetical works, some of which were committed to paper, others lost for the want of it. In this country he has published a volume entitled "Additions to the Memoirs of Silvio Pellico," containing numerous anecdotes of the captivity not recorded in Pellico's work, and an "Essay on the Classic and Romantic Schools," the author proposing to divide them anew and designate them by novel distinctions. There is at least some scholarship and some originality in this essay. It is also brief. Maroncelli regards it as the best of his compositions. It is strongly tinctured with transcendentalism. The volume contains, likewise, some poems, of which the

"Psalm of Life" and the "Psalm of the Dawn" have never been translated into English. "Winds of the Wakened Spring," one of the pieces included, has been happily rendered by Mr. Halleck, and is the most favorable specimen that could have been selected. These "Additions" accompanied a Boston version of "My Prisons, by Silvio Pellico."

Maroncelli is now about fifty years old, and bears on his person the marks of long suffering; he has lost a leg; his hair and beard became gray many years ago; just now he is suffering from severe illness, and from this it can scarcely be expected that he will recover.

In figure he is short and slight. His forehead is rather low but broad. His eyes are light blue and weak. The nose and mouth are large. His features in general have all the Italian mobility; their expression is animated and full of intelligence. He speaks hurriedly and gesticulates to excess. He is irritable, frank, generous, chivalrous, warmly attached to his friends, and expecting from them equal devotion. His love of country is unbounded, and he is quite enthusiastic in his endeavors to circulate in America the literature of Italy.

LAUGHTON OSBORN.

Personally Mr. OSBORN is little known as an author, either to the public or in literary society, but he has made a great many "sensations" anonymously, or with a *nom*

de plume. I am not sure that he has published any thing with his own name.

One of his earliest works—if not his earliest—was "The Adventures of Jeremy Levis by Himself," in one volume, a kind of medley of fact, fiction, satire, criticism, and novel philosophy. It is a dashing, reckless *brochure*, brimful of talent and audacity. Of course it was covertly admired by the few, and loudly condemned by all of the many who can fairly be said to have seen it at all. It had no great circulation. There was something wrong, I fancy, in the mode of its issue.

"Jeremy Levis" was followed by "The Dream of Alla-Ad-Deen, from the romance of 'Anastasia,' by Charles Erskine White, D.D." This is a thin pamphlet of thirty-two pages, each page containing about one hundred and forty words. Alla-Ad-Deen is the son of Aladdin of "wonderful lamp" memory, and the story is in the "Vision of Mirza," or "Rasselas" way. The design is to reconcile us to death and evil, on the somewhat unphilosophical ground that, comparatively, we are of little importance in the scale of creation. The author himself supposes this scale to be infinite, and thus his argument proves too much; for if evil should be regarded by man as of no consequence because, "comparatively," *he* is of none, it must be regarded as of no consequence by the angels for a similar reason—and so on in a never-ending ascent. In other words, the only thing proved is the rather bull-ish proposition that evil is no evil at all. I do not find that

the "Dream" elicited any attention. It would have been more appropriately published in one of our magazines.

Next in order came, I believe, "The Confessions of a Poet, by Himself." This was in two volumes, of the ordinary novel form, but printed very openly. It made much noise in the literary world, and no little curiosity was excited in regard to its author, who was generally supposed to be John Neal. There were some grounds for this supposition, the tone and matter of the narrative bearing much resemblance to those of "Errata" and "Seventy-Six," especially in the points of boldness and vigor. The "Confessions," however, far surpassed any production of Mr. Neal's in a certain air of cultivation (if not exactly of scholarship) which pervaded it, as well as in the management of its construction—a particular in which the author of "The Battle of Niagara" invariably fails; there is no precision, no finish, about any thing he does—always an excessive *force*, but little of refined art. Mr. N. seems to be deficient in a sense of *completeness*. He begins well, vigorously, startlingly, and proceeds by fits, quite at random, now prosing, now exciting vivid interest, but his conclusions are sure to be hurried and indistinct, so that the reader perceives a falling off, and closes the book with dissatisfaction. He has done nothing which, as a whole, is even respectable, and the "Confessions" are quite remarkable for their artistic unity and perfection. But in higher regards they are to be commended. I do not think, indeed, that a better book of its kind has been writ-

ten in America. To be sure, it is not precisely the work to place in the hands of a lady, but its scenes of passion are intensely wrought, its incidents are striking and original, its sentiments audacious and suggestive at least, if not at all times tenable. In a word, it is that rare thing, a fiction of *power* without rudeness. Its spirit, in general, resembles that of "Miserrimus" and "Martin Faber."

Partly on account of what most persons would term their licentiousness, partly, also, on account of the prevalent idea that Mr. Neal (who was never very popular with the press) had written them, the "Confessions," by the newspapers, were most unscrupulously misrepresented and abused. The *Commercial Advertiser* of New York, was, it appears, foremost in condemnation, and Mr. Osborn thought proper to avenge his wrongs by the publication of a bulky satirical poem levelled at the critics in general, but more especially at Colonel Stone the editor of the "*Commercial.*" This satire (which was published in exquisite style as regards print and paper) was entitled "The Vision of Rubeta." Owing to the high price necessarily set upon the book, no great many copies were sold, but the few that got into circulation made quite a hubbub, and with reason, for the satire was not only bitter but personal in the last degree. It was, moreover, very censurably indecent—*filthy* is, perhaps, the more appropriate word. The press, without exception, or nearly so, condemned it in loud terms, without taking the trouble to investigate its pretensions as a literary work. But as "The Confessions

of a Poet" was *one* of the best novels of its kind ever written in this country, so "The Vision of Rubeta" was decidedly *the best* satire. For its vulgarity and gross personality there is no defence, but its mordacity cannot be gainsaid. In calling it, however, the best American satire, I do not intend any excessive commendation—for it is, in fact, the *only* satire composed by an American. Trumbull's clumsy work is nothing at all, and then we have Halleck's "Croakers," which is very feeble—but what is there besides? The "Vision" is our best satire, and still a sadly deficient one. It was bold enough and bitter enough, and well constructed and decently versified, but it failed in *sarcasm* because its malignity was permitted to render itself evident. The author is never very severe, because he is never sufficiently cool. We laugh not so much at the objects of his satire as we do at himself for getting into so great a passion. But, perhaps, under no circumstances is wit the *forte* of Mr. Osborn. He has few equals at downright invective.

The "Vision" was succeeded by "Arthur Carryl and other Poems," including an additional canto of the satire, and several happy although not in all cases accurate or comprehensive imitations in English of the Greek and Roman metres. "Arthur Carryl" is a fragment, in the manner of "Don Juan." I do not think it especially meritorious. It has, however, a truth-telling and discriminative preface, and its notes are well worthy perusal. Some opinions embraced in these latter on the topic of

versification I have examined in one of the series of articles called "Marginalia."

I am not aware that since "Arthur Carryl" Mr. Osborn has written any thing more than a "Treatise on Oil Painting," issued not long ago by Messrs. Wiley and Putnam. This work is highly spoken of by those well qualified to judge, but is, I believe, principally a compilation or compendium.

In personal character, Mr. O. is one of the most remarkable men I ever yet had the pleasure of meeting. He is undoubtedly one of "Nature's own noblemen," full of generosity, courage, honor—chivalrous in every respect, but, unhappily, carrying his ideas of chivalry, or rather of independence, to the point of Quixotism, if not of absolute insanity. He has no doubt been misapprehended, and therefore wronged, by the world; but he should not fail to remember that the source of the wrong lay in his own idiosyncrasy—one altogether unintelligible and unappreciable by the mass of mankind.

He is a member of one of the oldest and most influential, formerly one of the wealthiest, families in New York. His acquirements and accomplishments are many and unusual. As poet, painter, and musician he has succeeded nearly equally well, and absolutely succeeded as each. His scholarship is extensive. In the French and Italian languages he is quite at home, and in every thing he is thorough and accurate. His critical abilities are to be highly respected, although he is apt to swear somewhat

too roundly by Johnson and Pope. Imagination is not Mr. Osborn's *forte*.

He is about thirty-two or three—certainly not more than thirty-five years of age. In person he is well made, probably five feet ten or eleven, muscular and active. Hair, eyes, and complexion, rather light; fine teeth; the whole expression of the countenance manly, frank, and prepossessing in the highest degree.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

The name of HALLECK is at least as well established in the poetical world as that of any American. Our principal poets are, perhaps, most frequently named in this order—Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sprague, Longfellow, Willis, and so on—Halleck coming second in the series, but holding, in fact, a rank in the public opinion quite equal to that of Bryant. The accuracy of the arrangement as above made may, indeed, be questioned. For my own part, I should have it thus—Longfellow, Bryant, Halleck, Willis, Sprague, Dana; and, recognizing rather the poetic capacity than the poems actually accomplished, there are three or four comparatively unknown writers whom I would place in the series between Bryant and Halleck, while there are about a dozen whom I should assign a position between Willis and Sprague. Two dozen at least might find room between Sprague and Dana—this latter, I fear, owing a very large portion of his reputation

to his *quondam* editorial connection with *The North American Review*. One or two poets, now in my mind's eye, I should have no hesitation in posting above even Mr. Longfellow—still not intending this as very extravagant praise.

It is noticeable, however, that, in the arrangement which I attribute to the popular understanding, the order observed is nearly, if not exactly, that of the ages—the poetic ages—of the individual poets. Those rank first who were first known. The priority has established the strength of impression. Nor is this result to be accounted for by mere reference to the old saw—that first impressions are the strongest. Gratitude, surprise, and a species of hyper-patriotic triumph, have been blended, and finally confounded with admiration or appreciation in regard to the *pioneers* of American literature, among whom there is not one whose productions have not been grossly overrated by his countrymen. Hitherto we have been in no mood to view with calmness and discuss with discrimination the real claims of the few who were *first* in convincing the mother country that her sons were not all brainless, as at one period she half affected and wholly wished to believe. Is there any one so blind as not to see that Mr. Cooper, for example, owes much, and Mr. Paulding nearly all, of his reputation as a novelist to his early occupation of the field? Is there anyone so dull as not to know that fictions which neither of these gentlemen *could* have written are written daily by native authors, without at-

tracting much more of commendation than can be included in a newspaper paragraph? And, again, is there any one so prejudiced as not to acknowledge that all this happens because there is no longer either reason or wit in the query, "Who reads an American book?"

I mean to say, of course, that Mr. Halleck, in the *apparent* public estimate, maintains a somewhat better position than that to which, on absolute grounds, he is entitled. There is something, too, in the *bonhomie* of certain of his compositions—something altogether distinct from poetic merit—which has aided to establish him; and much, also, must be admitted on the score of his personal popularity, which is deservedly great. With all these allowances, however, there will still be found a large amount of poetical fame to which he is *fairly* entitled.

He has written very little, although he began at an early age—when quite a boy, indeed. His "juvenile" works, however, have been kept very judiciously from the public eye. Attention was first called to him by his satires, signed "Croaker" and "Croaker & Co.," published in the New York *Evening Post*, in 1819. Of these the pieces with the signature "Croaker & Co." were the joint work of Halleck and his friend Drake. The political and personal features of these *jeux d'esprit* gave them a consequence and a notoriety to which they are entitled on no other account. They are not without a species of drollery, but are loosely and no doubt carelessly written.

Neither was "Fanny," which closely followed the

"Croakers," constructed with any great deliberation. "It was printed," say the ordinary memoirs, "within three weeks from its commencement"; but the truth is, that a couple of days would have been an ample allowance of time for any such composition. If we except a certain gentlemanly ease and *insouciance*, with some fancy of illustration, there is really very little about this poem to be admired. There has been no positive avowal of its authorship, although there can be no doubt of its having been written by Halleck. He, I presume, does not esteem it very highly. It is a mere extravaganza, in close imitation of "Don Juan"—a vehicle for squibs at cotemporary persons and things.

Our poet, indeed, seems to have been much impressed by "Don Juan," and attempts to engraft its farcicalities even upon the grace and delicacy of "Alnwick Castle," as, for example, in—

> Men in the coal and cattle line,
> From Teviot's bard and hero land,
> From royal Berwick's beach of sand,
> From Wooler, Morpeth, Hexham, *and*
> Newcastle upon Tyne.

These things may lay claim to oddity, but no more. They are totally out of keeping with the tone of the sweet poem into which they are thus clumsily introduced, and serve no other purpose than to deprive it of all unity of effect. If a poet *must* be farcical, let him be just that; he can be nothing better at the same moment. To be drolly sentimental, or even sentimentally droll, is intolerable to men and gods and columns.

"Alnwick Castle" is distinguished, in general, by that air of quiet grace, both in thought and expression, which is the prevailing feature of the muse of Halleck. Its second stanza is a good specimen of this manner. The commencement of the fourth belongs to a very high order of poetry.

> Wild roses by the Abbey towers
> Are gay in their young bud and bloom—
> *They were born of a race of funeral flowers*
> That garlanded, in long-gone hours,
> A Templar's knightly tomb.

This is gloriously imaginative, and the effect is singularly increased by the sudden transition from iambuses to anapæsts. The passage is, I think, the noblest to be found in Halleck, and I would be at a loss to discover its parallel in all American poetry.

"Marco Bozzaris" has much lyrical, without any great amount of *ideal*, beauty. Force is its prevailing feature—force resulting rather from well-ordered metre, vigorous rhythm, and a judicious disposal of the circumstances of the poem, than from any of the true lyric material. I should do my conscience great wrong were I to speak of "Marco Bozzaris" as it is the fashion to speak of it, at least in print. Even as a lyric or ode it is surpassed by many American and a multitude of foreign compositions of a similar character.

"Burns" has numerous passages exemplifying its author's felicity of *expression;* as, for instance—

> Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines—
> Shrines to no code or creed confined—

The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.

And, again—

There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls, and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with Poesy's
Purer and holier fires.

But to the *sentiment* involved in this last quatrain I feel disposed to yield an assent more thorough than might be expected. Burns, indeed, was the puppet of circumstance. As a poet, no person on the face of the earth has been more extravagantly, more absurdly overrated.

"The Poet's Daughter" is one of the most characteristic works of Halleck, abounding in his most distinctive traits—grace, expression, repose, *insouciance*. The vulgarity of

I 'm busy in the cotton trade
And sugar line

has, I rejoice to see, been omitted in the late editions. The eleventh stanza is certainly not English as it stands, and, besides, is quite unintelligible. What is the meaning of this—

But her who asks, though first among
The good, the beautiful, the young,
The birthright of a spell more strong
Than these have brought her.

The "Lines on the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake" is, as a whole, one of the best poems of its author. Its simplicity and delicacy of sentiment will recommend it

to all readers. It is, however, carelessly written, and the first quatrain,

> Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days—
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> Nor named thee but to praise,

although beautiful, bears too close a resemblance to the still more beautiful lines of Wordsworth—

> She dwelt among the untrodden ways
> Beside the springs of Dove,
> A maid whom there were none to praise,
> And very few to love.

In versification Mr. Halleck is much as usual, although in this regard Mr. Bryant has paid him numerous compliments. "Marco Bozzaris" has certainly some vigor of rhythm, but its author, in short, writes carelessly, loosely, and as a matter of course, seldom effectively, so far as the outworks of literature are concerned.

Of late days he has nearly given up the muses, and we recognise his existence as a poet chiefly by occasional translations from the Spanish or German.

Personally, he is a man to be admired, respected, but more especially beloved. His address has all the captivating *bonhomie* which is the leading feature of his poetry, and, indeed, of his whole moral nature. With his friends he is all order, enthusiasm, and cordiality, but to the world at large he is reserved, shunning society, into which he is seduced only with difficulty, and upon rare

occasions. The love of solitude seems to have become with him a passion.

He is a good modern linguist, and an excellent *belles-lettres* scholar; in general, has read a great deal, although very discursively. He is what the world calls *ultra* in most of his opinions, more particularly about literature and politics, and is fond of broaching and supporting paradoxes. He converses fluently with animation and zeal; is choice and accurate in his language, exceedingly quick at repartee, and apt at anecdote. His manners are courteous, with dignity and a little tincture of Gallicism. His age is about fifty. In height he is probably five feet seven. He *has been* stout, but may now be called well-proportioned. His forehead is a noble one, broad, massive, and intellectual, a little bald about the temples; eyes dark and brilliant, but not large; nose Grecian; chin prominent; mouth finely chiselled and full of expression, although the lips are thin; his smile is peculiarly sweet.

In *Graham's Magazine* for September, 1843, there appeared an engraving of Mr. Halleck from a painting by Inman. The likeness conveys a good general idea of the man, but is far too stout and youthful-looking for his appearance at present.

His usual pursuits have been commercial, but he is now the principal superintendent of the business of Mr. John Jacob Astor. He is unmarried.

ANN S. STEPHENS.

Mrs. STEPHENS has made no collection of her works, but has written much for the magazines and well. Her compositions have been brief tales with occasional poems. She made her first "sensation" in obtaining a premium of four hundred dollars, offered for "the best prose story" by some one of our journals, her "Mary Derwent" proving the successful article. The *amount* of the prize, however—a much larger one than it has been the custom to offer—had more to do with the *éclât* of the success than had the positive merit of the tale, although this is very considerable. She has subsequently written several better things—"Malina Gray," for example, "Alice Copley," and "The Two Dukes." These are on serious subjects. In comic ones she has comparatively failed. She is fond of the bold, striking, trenchant—in a word, of the melo-dramatic; has a quick appreciation of the picturesque, and is not unskilful in delineations of character. She seizes adroitly on salient incidents and presents them with vividness to the eye, but in their combinations or adaptations she is by no means so thoroughly at home—that is to say, her plots are not so good as are their individual items. Her style is what the critics usually term "powerful," but lacks real power through its verboseness and floridity. It is, in fact, generally turgid—even bombastic—involved, needlessly parenthetical, and superabundant in epithets, although these latter are frequently well chosen. Her sentences are, also, for the most part too

long; we forget their commencements ere we get at their terminations. Her faults, nevertheless, both in matter and manner, belong to the effervescence of high talent, if not exactly of genius.

Of Mrs. Stephen's poetry I have seen so very little that I feel myself scarcely in condition to speak of it.

She began her literary life, I believe, by editing *The Portland Magazine*, and has since been announced as editress of *The Ladies' Companion*, a monthly journal published some years ago in New York, and also, at a later period, of *Graham's Magazine*, and subsequently, again, of *Peterson's National Magazine*. These announcements were announcements and no more; the lady had nothing to do with the editorial control of any of the three last-named works.

The portrait of Mrs. Stephens, which appeared in *Graham's Magazine* for November, 1844, cannot fairly be considered a likeness at all. She is tall, and slightly inclined to *embonpoint*—an English figure. Her forehead is somewhat low, but broad; the features generally massive, but full of life and intellectuality. The eyes are blue and brilliant; the hair blonde and very luxuriant.

EVERT A. DUYCKINCK.

Mr. DUYCKINCK is one of the most influential of the New York *littérateurs*, and has done a great deal for the interest of American letters. Not the least important

service rendered by him was the projection and editorship of Wiley and Putnam's "Library of Choice Reading," a series which brought to public notice many valuable foreign works which had been suffering under neglect in this country, and at the same time afforded unwonted encouragement to native authors by publishing their books, in good style and in good company, without trouble or risk to the authors themselves, and in the very teeth of the disadvantages arising from the want of an international copyright law. At one period it seemed that this happy scheme was to be overwhelmed by the competition of rival publishers—taken, in fact, quite out of the hands of those who, by "right of discovery," were entitled at least to its first fruits. A great variety of "Libraries," in imitation, were set on foot, but whatever may have been the temporary success of any of these latter, the original one had already too well established itself in the public favor to be overthrown, and thus has not been prevented from proving of great benefit to our literature at large.

Mr. Duyckinck has slyly acquired much fame and numerous admirers under the *nom de plume* of "Felix Merry." The various essays thus signed have attracted attention everywhere from the judicious. The style is remarkable for its very unusual blending of purity and ease with a seemingly inconsistent originality, force, and independence.

"Felix Merry," in connection with Mr. Cornelius Matthews, was one of the editors and originators of

Arcturus, decidedly the very best magazine in many respects ever published in the United States. A large number of its most interesting papers were the work of Mr. D. The magazine was, upon the whole, a little *too good* to enjoy extensive popularity—although I am here using an equivocal phrase, for a *better* journal might have been far more acceptable to the public. I must be understood, then, as employing the epithet "good" in the sense of the literary quietists. The general taste of *Arcturus* was, I think, *excessively tasteful;* but this character applies rather more to its external or mechanical appearance than to its essential qualities. Unhappily, magazines and other similar publications are, in the beginning, judged chiefly by externals. People saw *Arcturus looking* very much like other works which had failed through notorious dulness, although admitted as *arbitri elegantiarum* in all points of what is termed taste or decorum; and they, the people, had no patience to examine any further. Cæsar's wife was required not only to *be* virtuous but to seem so, and in letters it is demanded not only that we be not stupid, but that we do not array ourselves in the habiliments of stupidity.

It cannot be said of *Arcturus* exactly that it wanted *force*. It was deficient in power of impression, and this deficiency is to be attributed mainly to the exceeding brevity of its articles—a brevity that degenerated into mere paragraphism, precluding dissertation or argument, and thus all permanent effect. The magazine, in fact, had

some of the worst or most inconvenient features without any of the compensating advantages of a weekly literary newspaper. The mannerism to which I refer seemed to have its source in undue admiration and consequent imitation of *The Spectator*.

In addition to his more obvious literary engagements, Mr. Duyckinck writes a great deal, editorially and otherwise, for *The Democratic Review*, *The Morning News*, and other periodicals.

In character he is remarkable, distinguished for the *bonhomie* of his manner, his simplicity and single-mindedness, his active beneficence, his hatred of wrong done even to any enemy, and especially for an almost Quixotic fidelity to his friends. He seems in perpetual good humor with all things, and I have no doubt that in his secret heart he is an optimist.

In person he is equally simple as in character—the one is a *pendent* of the other. He is about five feet eight inches high, somewhat slender. The forehead, phrenologically, is a good one; eyes and hair light; the whole expression of the face that of serenity and benevolence, contributing to give an idea of youthfulness. He is probably thirty, but does not seem to be twenty-five. His dress, also, is in full keeping with his character, scrupulously neat but plain, and conveying an instantaneous conviction of the gentleman. He is a descendant of one of the oldest and best Dutch families in the state. Married

MARY GOVE.

Mrs. MARY GOVE, under the pseudonym of "Mary Orme," has written many excellent papers for the magazines. Her subjects are usually tinctured with the mysticism of the transcendentalists, but are truly imaginative. Her style is quite remarkable for its luminousness and precision—two qualities very rare with her sex. An article entitled "The Gift of Prophecy," published originally in *The Broadway Journal*, is a fine specimen of her manner.

Mrs. Gove, however, has acquired less notoriety by her literary compositions than by her lectures on physiology to classes of females. These lectures are said to have been instructive and useful; they certainly elicited much attention. Mrs. G. has also given public discourses on Mesmerism, I believe, and other similar themes—matters which put to the severest test the credulity, or, more properly, the faith of mankind. She is, I think, a Mesmerist, a Swedenborgian, a phrenologist, a homœopathist, and a disciple of Priessnitz—what more I am not prepared to say.

She is rather below the medium height, somewhat thin, with dark hair and keen, intelligent black eyes. She converses well and with enthusiasm. In many respects a very interesting woman.

JAMES ALDRICH.

Mr. ALDRICH has written much for the magazines etc.,

and at one time assisted Mr. Park Benjamin in the conduct of *The New World*. He also originated, I believe, and edited a not very long-lived or successful weekly paper, called *The Literary Gazette*, an imitation in its external appearance of the London journal of the same name. I am not aware that he has made any collection of his writings. His poems abound in the true poetic spirit, but they are frequently chargeable with plagiarism, or something much like it. True, I have seen but three of Mr. Aldrich's compositions in verse—the three (or perhaps there are four of them,) included by Doctor Griswold in his "Poets and Poetry of America." Of these three (or four), however, there are two which I cannot help regarding as palpable plagiarisms. Of one of them, in especial, "*A* Death-Bed," it is impossible to say a plausible word in defence. Both in matter and manner it is nearly identical with a little piece entitled "*The* Death-Bed," by Thomas Hood.

The charge of plagiarism, nevertheless, is a purely literary one; and a plagiarism even distinctly proved by no means necessarily involves any moral delinquency. This proposition applies very especially to what appear to be *poetical* thefts. The poetic sentiment presupposes a keen appreciation of the beautiful with a longing for its assimilation into the poetic identity. What the poet intensely admires becomes, thus, in very fact, although only partially, a portion of his own soul. Within this soul it has a secondary origination; and the poet, thus possessed

by another's thought, cannot be said to take of it possession. But in either view he thoroughly feels it as *his own;* and the tendency to this feeling is counteracted only by the sensible presence of the true, palpable origin of the thought in the volume whence he has derived it—an origin which, in the long lapse of years, it is impossible *not* to forget, should the thought itself, as it often is, be forgotten. But the frailest association will regenerate it; it springs up with all the vigor of a new birth; its absolute originality is not with the poet a matter even of suspicion; and when he has written it and printed it, and on its account is charged with plagiarism, there will be no one more entirely astounded than himself. Now, from what I have said, it appears that the liability to accidents of this character is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment, of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact, all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and palpable plagiarisms we must search the works of the most eminent poets.

Since penning the above I have found five quatrains by Mr. Aldrich, with the heading "Molly Gray." These verses are in the fullest exemplification of what I have just said of their author, evincing at once, in the most remarkable manner, both his merit as an imaginative poet and his unconquerable proneness to imitation. I quote the two concluding quatrains.

Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!
What may thy fit emblem be?

Stream or star or bird or flower—
They are all too poor for thee.

No type to match thy beauty
My wandering fancy brings—
Not fairer than its chrysalis
Thy soul with its golden wings!

Here the "Pretty, fairy Molly Gray!" will put every reader in mind of Tennyson's "Airy, fairy Lillian!" by which Mr. Aldrich's whole poem has been clearly suggested; but the thought in the *finale* is, as far as I know any thing about it, original, and is not more happy than happily expressed.

Mr. Aldrich is about thirty-six years of age. In regard to his person there is nothing to be especially noted.

HENRY CARY.

Doctor Griswold introduces Mr. CARY to the appendix of "The Poet and Poetry," as Mr. Henry Carey, and gives him credit for an anacreontic song of much merit entitled, or commencing, "Old Wine to Drink." This was *not* witten by Mr. C. He has composed little verse, if any, but, under the *nom de plume* of "John Waters," has acquired some note by a series of prose essays in the New York *American*, and *The Knickerbocker*. These essays have merit, unquestionably, but some person, in an article furnished *The Broadway Journal*, before my assumption of its editorship, has gone to the extreme of toadyism in their praise. This critic (possibly Mr.

Briggs) thinks that John Waters "is in some sort a Sam Rogers"—"resembles Lamb in fastidiousness of taste"—"has a finer artistic taste than the author of the 'Sketch-Book'"—that his "sentences are the most perfect in the language—too perfect to be peculiar"—that "it would be a vain task to hunt through them all for a superfluous conjunction," and that "we need them (the works of John Waters) as models of style in these days of rhodomontades and *Macaulayisms!*"

The truth seems to be that Mr. Cary is a vivacious, fanciful, entertaining essayist—a fifth- or sixth-rate one—with a style that, as times go—in view of such stylists as Mr. Briggs, for example—may be termed respectable, and no more. What the critic of the B. J. wishes us to understand by a style that is "too perfect," "the most perfect," etc., it is scarcely worth while to inquire, since it is generally supposed that "perfect" admits of no degrees of comparison; but if Mr. Brigg's (or whoever it is) finds it "a vain task to hunt" through all Mr. John Waters' works "for a superfluous conjunction," there are few school-boys who would not prove more successful hunters than Mr. Briggs.

"It was well filled," says the essayist, on the very page containing these encomiums, "*and* yet the number of performers," etc. "We paid our visit to the incomparable ruins of the castle, *and* then proceeded to retrace our steps, and examine our wheels at every post-house, reached," etc. "After consultation with a mechanic at

Heidelberg, *and* finding that," etc. The last sentence should read, "Finding, after consultation," etc.—the "and" would thus be avoided. Those in the two sentences first quoted are obviously pleonastic. Mr. Cary, in fact, abounds *very especially* in superfluities—(as here, for example, "He seated himself at a piano *that was* near the front of the stage")—and, to speak the truth, is continually guilty of all kinds of grammatical improprieties. I repeat that, in this respect, he is decent, and no more.

Mr. Cary is what Dr. Griswold calls a "gentleman of elegant leisure." He is wealthy and much addicted to letters and *virtû*. For a long time he was President of the Phœnix Bank of New York, and the principal part of his life has been devoted to business. There is nothing remarkable about his personal appearance.

CHRISTOPHER PEASE CRANCH.

The Reverend C. P. CRANCH is one of the least intolerable of the school of Boston transcendentalists—and, in fact, I believe that he has at last "come out from among them," abandoned their doctrines (whatever they are) and given up their company in disgust. He was at one time one of the most noted, and undoubtedly one of the least absurd contributors to *The Dial*, but has reformed his habits of thought and speech, domiciliated himself in New York, and set up the easel of an artist in one of the Gothic chambers of the University.

About two years ago a volume of "Poems by Christopher Pease Cranch" was published by Carey & Hart. It was most unmercifully treated by the critics, and much injustice, in my opinion, was done to the poet. He seems to me to possess unusual vivacity of fancy and dexterity of expression, while his versification is remarkable for its accuracy, vigor, and even for its originality of effect. I might say, perhaps, rather more than all this, and maintain that he has imagination if he would only condescend to employ it, which he will not, or *would* not until lately —the word-compounders and quibble-concocters of Frogpondium having inoculated him with a preference for Imagination's half sister, the Cinderella Fancy. Mr. Cranch has seldom contented himself with harmonious combinations of thought. There must always be, to afford him perfect satisfaction, a certain amount of the odd, of the whimsical, of the affected, of the *bizarre*. He is full of absurd conceits as Cowley or Donne, with this difference, that the conceits of these latter are euphuisms beyond redemption—flat, irremediable, self-contented nonsensicalities, and in so much are good of their kind; but the conceits of Mr. Cranch are, for the most part, conceits intentionally manufactured, for conceit's sake, out of the material for properly imaginative, harmonious, proportionate, or poetical ideas. We see every moment that he has been at uncommon *pains* to make a fool of himself.

But perhaps I am wrong in supposing that I am at all in condition to decide on the merits of Mr. C.'s poetry,

which is professedly addressed to the few. "Him we will seek," says the poet—

> Him we will seek, and none but him,
> Whose inward sense hath not grown dim;
> Whose soul is steeped in Nature's tinct,
> And to the Universal linked;
> Who loves the beauteous Infinite
> With deep and ever new delight,
> And carrieth where'er he goes
> The inborn sweetness of the rose,
> The perfume as of Paradise—
> The talisman above all price—
> The optic glass that wins from far
> The meaning of the utmost star—
> The key that opes the golden doors
> Where earth and heaven have piled their stores—
> The magic ring, the enchanter's wand—
> The title-deed to Wonder-Land—
> The wisdom that o'erlooketh sense,
> The clairvoyance of Innocence.

This is all very well, fanciful, pretty, and neatly turned —all with the exception of the two last lines, and it is a pity they were not left out. It is laughable to see that the transcendental poets, if beguiled for a minute or two into respectable English and common-sense, are always sure to remember their cue just as they get to the end of their song, which, by way of *salvo*, they then round off with a bit of doggerel about "wisdom that o'erlook*eth* sense" and "the clairvoyance of Innocence." It is especially observable that, in adopting the cant of thought, the cant of phraseology is adopted at the same instant. Can Mr. Cranch, or can anybody else, inform me why it is

that, in the really sensible opening passages of what I have here quoted, he employs the modern, and only in the final couplet of goosetherumfoodle makes use of the obsolete terminations of verbs in the the third person singular, present tense?

One of the best of Mr. Cranch's compositions is undoubtedly his poem on *Niagara*. It has some natural thoughts, and grand ones, suiting the subject; but then they are more than half-divested of their nature by the attempt at adorning them with *oddity* of expression. *Quaintness* is an admissible and important adjunct to ideality—an adjunct whose value has been long misapprehended,—but in picturing the sublime it is altogether out of place. What idea of power, of grandeur, for example, can any human being connect even with Niagara, when Niagara is described in language so trippingly fantastical, so palpably adapted to a purpose, as that which follows?

I stood upon a speck of ground;
Before me fell a stormy ocean.
I was like a captive bound;
And around
A universe of sound
Troubled the heavens with ever-quivering motion.

Down, down forever—down, down forever—
Something falling, falling, falling;
Up, up forever—up, up forever,
Resting never,
Boiling up forever,
Steam-clouds shot up with thunder-bursts appalling.

It is difficult to conceive any thing more ludicrously out

of keeping than the thoughts of these stanzas and the *petit-maître*, fidgety, hop-skip-and-jump air of the words and the Liliputian parts of the versification.

A somewhat similar metre is adopted by Mr. C. in his "Lines on Hearing Triumphant Music," but as the subject is essentially different, so the effect is by no means so displeasing. I copy one of the stanzas as the noblest individual passage which I can find among all the poems of its author.

> That glorious strain!
> Oh, from my brain
> *I see the shadow flitting like scared ghosts.*
> *A light—a light*
> *Shines in to-night*
> *Round the good angels trooping to their posts.*
> *And the black cloud is rent in twain*
> *Before the ascending strain.*

Mr. Cranch is well educated, and quite accomplished. Like Mr. Osborn he is musician, painter, and poet, being in each capacity very respectably successful.

He is about thirty-three or four years of age; in height, perhaps, five feet eleven; athletic; front face not unhandsome—the forehead evincing intellect, and the smile pleasant; but the profile is marred by the turning up of the nose, and, altogether is hard and disagreeable. His eyes and hair are dark brown—the latter worn short, slightly inclined to curl. Thick whiskers meeting under the chin, and much out of keeping with the shirt-collar *à la Byron*. Dresses with marked plainness. He is married.

SARAH MARGARET FULLER.

Miss FULLER was at one time editor, or one of the editors of *The Dial*, to which she contributed many of the most forcible and certainly some of the most peculiar papers. She is known, too, by "Summer on the Lakes," a remarkable assemblage of sketches, issued in 1844, by Little & Brown, of Boston. More lately she has published "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," a work which has occasioned much discussion, having had the good fortune to be warmly abused and chivalrously defended. At present, she is assistant editor of *The New York Tribune*, or rather a salaried contributor to that journal, for which she has furnished a great variety of matter, chiefly notices of new books, etc., etc., her articles being designated by an asterisk. Two of the best of them were a review of Professor Longfellow's late magnificent edition of his own works (with a portrait), and an appeal to the public in behalf of her friend Harro Harring. The review did her infinite credit; it was frank, candid, independent—in even ludicrous contrast to the usual mere glorifications of the day, giving honor *only* where honor was due, yet evincing the most thorough capacity to appreciate and the most sincere intention to place in the fairest light the real and idiosyncratic merits of the poet.

In my opinion it is one of the very few reviews of Longfellow's poems, ever published in America, of which the critics have not had abundant reason to be ashamed. Mr. Longfellow is entitled to a certain and very distinguished

rank among the poets of his country, but that country is disgraced by the evident toadyism which would award to his social position and influence, to his fine paper and large type, to his morocco binding and gilt edges, to his flattering portrait of himself, and to the illustrations of his poems by Huntingdon, that amount of indiscriminate approbation which neither could nor would have been given to the poems themselves.

The defence of Harro Harring, or rather the Philippic against those who were doing him wrong, was one of the most eloquent and well-*put* articles I have ever yet seen in a newspaper.

"Woman in the Nineteeth Century" is a book which few women in the country could have written, and no woman in the country would have published, with the exception of Miss Fuller. In the way of independence, of unmitigated radicalism, it is one of the "Curiosities of American Literature," and Doctor Griswold should include it in his book. I need scarcely say that the essay is nervous, forcible, thoughtful, suggestive, brilliant, and to a certain extent scholar-like—for all that Miss Fuller produces is entitled to these epithets—but I must say that the conclusions reached are only in part my own. Not that they are too bold, by any means—too novel, too startling, or too dangerous in their consequences, but that in their attainment too many premises have been distorted, and too many analogical inferences left altogether out of sight. I mean to say that the intention of the

Deity as regards sexual differences—an intention which can be distinctly comprehended only by throwing the exterior (more sensitive) portions of the mental retina *casually* over the wide field of universal *analogy*—I mean to say that this *intention* has not been sufficiently considered. Miss Fuller has erred, too, through her own excessive objectiveness. She judges *woman* by the heart and intellect of Miss Fuller, but there are not more than one or two dozen Miss Fullers on the whole face of the earth. Holding these opinions in regard to "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," I still feel myself called upon to disavow the silly, condemnatory criticism of the work which appeared in one of the earlier numbers of *The Broadway Journal*. That article was *not* written by myself, and *was* written by my associate, Mr. Briggs.

The most favorable estimate of Miss Fuller's genius (for high genius she unquestionably possesses) is to be obtained, perhaps, from her contributions to *The Dial*, and from her "Summer on the Lakes." Many of the *descriptions* in this volume are unrivalled for *graphicality*, (why is there not such a word?) for the force with which they convey the true by the novel or unexpected, by the introduction of touches which other artists would be sure to omit as irrelevant to the subject. This faculty, too, springs from her subjectiveness, which leads her to paint a scene less by its features than by its effects.

Here, for example, is a portion of her account of Niagara :—

Daily these proportions widened and towered more and more upon my sight, and I got at last a proper foreground for these sublime distances. Before coming away, I think I really saw the full wonder of the scene. After awhile it *so drew me into itself as to inspire an undefined dread, such as I never knew before, such as may be felt when death is about to usher us into a new existence.* The perpetual trampling of the waters seized my senses. *I felt that no other sound, however near, could be heard, and would start and look behind me for a foe.* I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, *images, such as had never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks.* Again and again this illusion recurred, and even *after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me.* What I liked best was to sit on Table Rock close to the great fall ; *there all power of observing details, all separate consciousness was quite lost.*

The truthfulness of the passages italicized will be felt by all ; the feelings described are, perhaps, experienced by every (imaginative) person who visits the fall ; but most persons, through predominant subjectiveness, would scarcely be conscious of the feelings, or, at best, would never think of employing them in an attempt to convey to others an impression of the scene. Hence so many desperate failures to convey it on the part of ordinary tourists. Mr. William W. Lord, to be sure, in his poem

"Niagara," is sufficiently objective; he describes not the fall, but very properly the effect of the fall upon *him*. He says that it made him think of his *own* greatness, of his *own* superiority, and so forth, and so forth; and it is only when we come to think that the thought of Mr. Lord's greatnesss is quite idiosyncratic, confined exclusively to Mr. Lord, that we are in condition to understand how, in despite of his objectiveness, he has failed to convey an idea of any thing beyond one Mr. William W. Lord.

From the essay entitled "Philip Van Artevelde," I copy a paragraph which will serve at once to exemplify Miss Fuller's more earnest (declamatory) style, and to show the tenor of her prospective speculations:—

At Chicago I read again "Philip Van Artevelde," and certain passages in it will always be in my mind associated with the deep sound of the lake, as heard in the night. I used to read a short time at night, and then open the blind to look out. The moon would be full upon the lake, and the calm breath, pure light, and the deep voice harmonized well with the thought of the Flemish hero. When will this country have such a man? It is what she needs—no thin Idealist, no coarse Realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous in the use of human instruments. A man, religious, virtuous, and—sagacious; a man of universal sympathies, but self-possessed; a man who knows the region of emotion, though he is not its slave; a man to whom this world is no mere spectacle or fleeting shadow, but a great, solemn game,

to be played with good heed, for its stakes are of eternal value, yet who, if his own play be true, heeds not what he loses by the falsehood of others. A man who lives from the past, yet knows that its honey can but moderately avail him; whose comprehensive eye scans the present, neither infatuated by its golden lures nor chilled by its many ventures; who possesses prescience, as the wise man must, but not so far as to be driven mad to-day by the gift which discerns to-morrow. When there is such a man for America, the thought which urges her on will be expressed.

From what I have quoted a *general* conception of the prose style of the authoress may be gathered. Her manner, however, is infinitely varied. It is always forcible—but I am not sure that it is always any thing else, unless I say picturesque. It rather indicates than evinces scholarship. Perhaps only the scholastic, or, more properly, those accustomed to look narrowly at the structure of phrases, would be willing to acquit her of ignorance of grammar—would be willing to attribute her slovenliness to disregard of the shell in anxiety for the kernel; or to waywardness, or to affection, or to blind reverence for Carlyle—would be able to detect, in her strange and continual inaccuracies, a capacity of the accurate.

"I cannot sympathize with such an apprehension; the spectacle is *capable to* swallow *up* all such objects."

"It is fearful, too, to know, as you look, that whatever has been swallowed by the cataract, is *like* to rise suddenly to light."

"I took our *mutual* friends to see her."

"It was always obvious that they had nothing in common *between them.*"

"The Indian cannot be looked at truly *except* by a poetic eye."

"McKenney's 'Tours to the Lakes' gives some facts not to be met *with* elsewhere."

"There is that mixture of culture and rudeness in the aspect of things *as* gives a feeling of freedom," etc., etc., etc.

These are merely a few, a very few instances, taken at random from among a multitude of *wilful* murders committed by Miss Fuller on the American of President Polk. She uses, too, the word "ignore," a vulgarity adopted only of late days (and to no good purpose, since there is no necessity for it) from the barbarisms of the law, and makes no scruple of giving the Yankee interpretation to the verbs "witness" and "realize," to say nothing of "use," as in the sentence, "I used to read a short time at night." It will not do to say, in defence of such words, that in such senses they may be found in certain dictionaries—in that of Bolles, for instance;—*some* kind of "authority" may be found for *any* kind of vulgarity under the sun.

In spite of these things, however, and of her frequent unjustifiable Carlyleisms (such as that of writing sentences which are no sentences, since, to be parsed, reference must be had to sentences preceding), the style of Miss Fuller is one of the very best with which I am acquainted. In

general effect, I know no style which surpasses it. It is singularly piquant, vivid, terse, bold, luminous—leaving details out of sight, it is every thing that a style need be.

I believe that Miss Fuller has written much poetry, although she has published little. That little is tainted with the affectation of the *transcendentalists* (I use this term, of course, in the sense which the public of late days seem resolved to give it), but is brimful of the poetic *sentiment*. Here, for example, is something in Coleridge's manner, of which the author of "Genevieve" might have had no reason to be ashamed :—

A maiden sat beneath a tree ;
Tear-bedewed her pale cheeks be,
And she sighed heavily.

From forth the wood into the *light*
A hunter strides with carol *light*,
And a glance so bold and bright.

He careless stopped and eyed the maid :
"Why weepest thou?" he gently said ;
"I love thee well, be not afraid."

He takes her hand and leads her on—
She should have waited there alone,
For he was not her chosen one.

He *leans* her head upon his breast—
She knew 't was not her home of rest,
But, ah, she had been sore distrest.

The sacred stars looked sadly down ;
The parting moon appeared to frown,
To see thus dimmed the diamond crown.

Then from the thicket starts a deer—
The huntsman, seizing *on* his spear,
Cries: "Maiden, wait thou for me here."

She sees him vanish into night—
She starts from sleep in deep affright,
For it was not her own true knight.

Though but in dream Gunhilda failed—
Though but a fancied ill assailed—
Though she but fancied fault bewailed—

Yet thought of day makes dream of night;
She is not worthy of the knight;
The inmost altar burns not bright.

If loneliness thou canst not bear—
Cannot the dragon's venom dare—
Of the pure meed thou shouldst despair.

Now sadder that lone maiden sighs;
Far bitterer tears profane her eyes;
Crushed in the dust her heart's flower lies.

To show the evident carelessness with which this poem was constructed, I have italicized an identical rhyme (of about the same force in versification as an identical proposition in logic) and two grammatical improprieties. *To lean* is a neuter verb, and "seizing *on*" is not properly to be called a pleonasm, merely because it is—nothing at all. The concluding line is difficult of pronunciation through excess of consonants. I should have preferred, indeed, the antepenultimate tristich as the *finale* of the poem.

The supposition that the book of an author is a thing apart from the author's self, is, I think, ill-founded. The

soul is a cipher, in the sense of a cryptograph; and the shorter a cryptograph is, the more difficulty there is in its comprehension—at a certain point of brevity it would bid defiance to an army of Champollions. And thus he who has written very little, may in that little either conceal his spirit or convey quite an erroneous idea of it—of his acquirements, talents, temper, manner, tenor, and depth (or shallowness) of thought—in a word, of his character, of himself. But this is impossible with him who has written much. Of such a person we get, from his books, not merely a just, but the most just, representation. Bulwer, the individual, personal man, in a green velvet waistcoat and amber gloves, is not by any means the veritable Sir Edward Lytton, who is discoverable only in "Ernest Maltravers," where his soul is deliberately and nakedly set forth. And who would ever know Dickens by looking at him, or talking with him, or doing any thing with him except reading his "Curiosity Shop"? What poet, in especial, but must feel at least the better portion of himself more fairly represented in even his commonest sonnet (earnestly written), than in his most elaborate or most intimate personalities?

I put all this as a general proposition, to which Miss Fuller affords a marked exception—to this extent, that her personal character and her printed book are merely one and the same thing. We get access to her soul *as* directly from the one as from the other—no *more* readily from this than from that—easily from either. Her acts

are bookish, and her books are less thoughts than acts. Her literary and her conversational manner are identical. Here is a passage from her "Summer on the Lakes":

The rapids enchanted me far beyond what I expected; they are so swift that they cease to *seem* so—you can think only of their *beauty*. The fountain beyond the Moss islands I discovered for myself, and thought it for some time an *accidental* beauty which it would not do to *leave*, lest I might never see it again. After I found it *permanent*, I returned many times to watch the play of its crest. In the little waterfall beyond, Nature seems, as she often does, to have made a *study* for some larger design. She delights in this—a sketch within a sketch—a dream within *a dream*. Wherever we see it the lines of the great buttress, in the fragment of stone, the hues of the waterfall, copied in the flowers that *star* its bordering mosses, we are *delighted;* for all the lineaments become *fluent*, and we mould the scene in congenial thought with its *genius*.

Now all this is precisely as Miss Fuller would *speak* it. She is perpetually saying just such things in just such words. To get the *conversational* woman in the mind's eye, all that is needed is to imagine her reciting the paragraph just quoted: but first let us have the *personal* woman. She is of the medium height; nothing remarkable about the figure; a profusion of lustrous light hair; eyes a bluish-gray, full of fire; capacious forehead; the mouth when in repose indicates profound sensibility, capacity for affection, for love—when moved by a slight smile, it becomes even beautiful in the intensity of this

expression; but the upper lip, as if impelled by the action of involuntary muscles, habitually uplifts itself, conveying the impression of a sneer. Imagine, now, a person of this description looking you at one moment earnestly in the face, at the next seeming to look only within her own spirit, or at the wall; moving nervously every now and then in her chair; speaking in a high key, but musically, deliberately (not hurriedly or loudly), with a delicious distinctness of enunciation—speaking, I say, the paragraph in question, and emphasizing the words which I have italicized, not by impulsion of the breath (as is usual) but by drawing them out as long as possible, nearly closing her eyes the while,—imagine all this, and we have both the woman and the authoress before us.

JAMES LAWSON.

Mr. LAWSON has published, I believe, only "Giordano," a tragedy, and two volumes entitled "Tales and Sketches by a Cosmopolite." The former was condemned (to use a gentle word) some years ago at the Park Theatre; and never was condemnation more religiously deserved. The latter are in so much more tolerable than the former, that they contain one non-execrable thing—"The Dapper Gentleman's Story"—in manner, as in title, an imitation of one of Irving's "Tales of a Traveller."

I mention Mr. L., however, not on account of his liter-

ary labors, but because, although a Scotchman, he has always professed to have greatly at heart the welfare of American letters. He is much in the society of authors and booksellers, converses fluently, tells a good story, is of social habits, and, with no taste whatever, is quite enthusiastic on all topics appertaining to Taste.

CAROLINE M. KIRKLAND.

Mrs. KIRKLAND'S "New Home," published under the *nom de plume* of "Mary Clavers," wrought an undoubted sensation. The cause lay not so much in picturesque description, in racy humor, or in animated individual portraiture, as in *truth* and novelty. The West at the time was a field comparatively untrodden by the sketcher or the novelist. In certain works, to be sure, we had obtained brief glimpses of character strange to us sojourners in the civilized East, but to Mrs. Kirkland alone we were indebted for our acquaintance with the *home* and home-life of the backwoodsman. With a fidelity and vigor that prove her pictures to be taken from the very life, she has represented "scenes" that could have occurred only *as* and *where* she has described them. She has placed before us the veritable settlers of the forest, with all their peculiarities national and individual; their free and fearless spirit; their homely utilitarian views; their shrewd out-looking for self-interest; their thrifty care and inventions multiform; their coarseness of manner, united with

real delicacy and substantial kindness when their sympathies are called into action—in a word, with all the characteristics of the Yankee, in a region where the salient points of character are unsmoothed by contact with society. So life-like were her representations that they have been appropriated as individual portraits by many who have been disposed to plead, trumpet-tongued, against what they supposed to be "the deep damnation of their taking-off."

"Forest Life" succeeded "A New Home," and was read with equal interest. It gives us, perhaps, more of the philosophy of Western life, but has the same freshness, freedom, piquancy. Of course, a truthful picture of pioneer habits could never be given in any grave history or essay so well as in the form of narration, where each character is permitted to develop itself; narration, therefore, was very properly adopted by Mrs. Kirkland in both the books just mentioned, and even more entirely in her later volume, "Western Clearings." This is the title of a collection of tales, illustrative, in general, of Western manners, customs, ideas. "The Land Fever" is a story of the wild days when the madness of speculation in land was at its height. It is a richly characteristic sketch, as is also "The Ball at Thram's Huddle." Only those who have had the fortune to visit or live in the "back settlements" can enjoy such pictures to the full. "Chances and Changes" and "Love *vs.* Aristocracy" are more regularly constructed *tales*, with the "universal

passion" as the moving power, but colored with the glowing hues of the West. "The Bee Tree" exhibits a striking but too numerous class among the settlers, and explains, also, the depth of the bitterness that grows out of an unprosperous condition in that "Paradise of the Poor." "Ambuscades" and "Half-Lengths from Life," I remember as two piquant sketches to which an annual, a year or two ago, was indebted for a most unusual sale among the conscious and pen-dreading denizens of the West. "Half-Lengths" turns on the trying subject of *caste*. "The Schoolmaster's Progress" is full of truth and humor. The Western pedagogue, the stiff, solitary, nondescript figure in the drama of a new settlement, occupying a middle position between "our folks" and "company," and "boarding round," is irresistibly amusing, and cannot fail to be recognised as the representative of a class. The occupation, indeed, always seems to mould those engaged in it—they all soon, like Master Horner, learn to "know well what belongs to the pedagogical character, and that facial solemnity stands high on the list of indispensable qualifications." The spelling-school, also, is a "new-country" feature which we owe Mrs. Kirkland many thanks for recording. The incidents of "An Embroidered Fact" are singular and picturesque, but not particularly illustrative of the "Clearings." The same may be said of "Bitter Fruits from Chance-Sown Seeds"; but this abounds in capital touches of character: all the horrors of the tale are brought about through suspicion of

pride, an accusation as destructive at the West as that of witchcraft in olden times, or the cry of mad dog in modern.

In the way of absolute *books*, Mrs. Kirkland, I believe, has achieved nothing beyond the three volumes specified (with another lately issued by Wiley & Putnam), but she is a very constant contributor to the magazines. Unquestionably, she is one of our best writers, has a province of her own, and in that province has few equals. Her most noticeable trait is a certain *freshness* of style, seemingly drawn, as her subjects in general, from the West. In the second place is to be observed a species of *wit*, approximating humor, and so interspersed with pure *fun*, that "wit," after all, is nothing like a definition of it. To give an example—"Old Thoughts on the New Year" commences with a quotation from Tasso's "Aminta":

> Il mondo invecchia
> E invecchiando intristisce;

and the following is given as a "free translation":

> The world is growing older
> And wiser day by day;
> Everybody knows beforehand
> What you 're going to say.
> We used to laugh and frolic—
> Now we must behave:
> Poor old Fun is dead and buried—
> Pride dug his grave.

This, if I am not mistaken, is the only specimen of *poetry* as yet given by Mrs. Kirkland to the world. She has

afforded us no means of judging in respect to her inventive powers, although fancy, and even imagination, are apparent in every thing she does. Her perceptive faculties enable her to *describe* with great verisimilitude. Her mere style is admirable, lucid, terse, full of variety, faultlessly pure, and yet bold—so bold as to appear heedless of the ordinary *decora* of composition. In even her most reckless sentences, however, she betrays the woman of refinement, of accomplishment, of unusually thorough education. There are a great many points in which her general manner resembles that of Willis, whom she evidently admires. Indeed, it would not be difficult to pick out from her works an occasional Willisism, not less palpable than happy. For example—

Peaches were like little green velvet buttons when George was first mistaken for Doctor Beaseley, and *before they were ripe* he, etc.

And again—

Mr. Hammond is fortunately settled in our neighborhood, for the present at least; and he has the neatest little cottage in the world, standing, too, under a very tall oak, which bends kindly over it, looking like the Princess Glumdalclitch inclining her ear to the box which contained her pet Gulliver.

Mrs. Kirkland's personal manner is an echo of her literary one. She is frank, cordial, yet sufficiently dignified—even bold, yet especially ladylike; converses with remarkable accuracy as well as fluency; is brilliantly witty, and now

and then not a little sarcastic, but a general amiability prevails.

She is rather above the medium height; eyes and hair dark; features somewhat small, with no marked characteristics, but the whole countenance beams with benevolence and intellect.

PROSPER M. WETMORE.

General WETMORE occupied some years ago quite a conspicuous position among the *littérateurs* of New York City. His name was seen very frequently in *The Mirror*, and in other similar journals, in connection with brief poems and occasional prose compositions. His only publication in volume form, I believe, is "The Battle of Lexington and Other Poems," a collection of considerable merit, and one which met a very cordial reception from the press.

Much of this cordiality, however, is attributable to the personal popularity of the man, to his facility in making acquaintances, and his tact in converting them into unwavering friends.

General Wetmore has an exhaustless fund of *vitality*. His energy, activity, and indefatigability are proverbial, not less than his peculiar sociability. These qualities give him unusual influence among his fellow-citizens, and have constituted him (as precisely the same traits have constituted his friend General Morris) one of a standing committee for the regulation of a certain class of city affairs

—such, for instance, as the getting up a complimentary benefit, or a public demonstration of respect for some deceased worthy, or a ball and dinner to Mr. Irving or Mr. Dickens.

Mr. Wetmore is not only a General, but Naval Officer of the Port of New York, Member of the Board of Trade, one of the Council of the Art Union, one of the Corresponding Committee of the Historical Society, and of more other committees than I can just now remember. His manners are *recherchés*, courteous—a little in the old-school way. He is sensitive, punctilious; speaks well, roundly, fluently, plausibly, and is skilled in pouring oil upon the waters of stormy debate.

He is, perhaps, fifty years of age, but has a youthful look; is about five feet eight in height, slender, neat, with an air of military compactness; looks especially well on horseback.

EMMA C. EMBURY.

Mrs. EMBURY is one of the most noted, and certainly one of the most meritorious of our female *littérateurs*. She has been many years before the public—her earliest compositions, I believe, having been contributed to the *New York Mirror* under the *nom de plume* "Ianthe." They attracted very general attention at the time of their appearance, and materially aided the paper. They were subsequently, with some other pieces, published in volume form, with the title "Guido and other Poems." The

book has been long out of print. Of late days its author has written but little poetry—that little, however, has at least indicated a poetic capacity of no common order.

Yet as a poetess she is comparatively unknown, her reputation in this regard having been quite overshadowed by that which she has acquired as a writer of tales. In this latter capacity she has, upon the whole, no equal among her sex in America—certainly no superior. She is not so vigorous as Mrs. Stephens, nor so vivacious as Miss Chubbuck, nor so caustic as Miss Leslie, nor so dignified as Miss Sedgwick, nor so graceful, fanciful, and *spirituelle* as Mrs. Osgood, but is *deficient* in none of the qualities for which these ladies are noted, and in certain particulars surpasses them all. Her subjects are *fresh*, if not always vividly original, and she manages them with more skill than is usually exhibited by our magazinists. She has also much imagination and sensibility, while her style is pure, earnest, and devoid of verbiage and exaggeration. I make a point of *reading* all tales to which I see the name of Mrs. Embury appended. The story by which she has attained most reputation is "Constance Latimer, the Blind Girl."

Mrs. E. is a daughter of Doctor Manly, an eminent physician of New York City. At an early age she married a gentleman of some wealth and of education, as well as of tastes akin to her own. She is noted for her domestic virtues no less than for literary talents and acquirements.

She is about the medium height; complexion, eyes, and hair, light; arched eyebrows; Grecian nose; the mouth a fine one, and indicative of firmness; the whole countenance pleasing, intellectual, and expressive. The portrait in *Graham's Magazine* for January, 1843, has no resemblance to her whatever.

EPES SARGENT.

Mr. SARGENT is well known to the public as the author of "Velasco, a Tragedy," "The Light of the Light-House, with other Poems," one or two short *nouvelettes*, and numerous contributions to the periodicals. He was also the editor of *Sargent's Magazine*, a monthly work, which had the misfortune of falling between two stools, never having been able to make up its mind whether to be popular with the three- or dignified with the five-dollar journals. It was a "happy *medium*" between the two classes, and met the fate of all happy *media* in dying, as well through lack of foes as of friends. *In medio tutissimus ibis* is the worst advice in the world for the editor of a magazine. Its observance proved the downfall of Mr. Lowell and his really meritorious *Pioneer*.

"Velasco" has received some words of commendation from the author of "Ion," and, I am ashamed to say, owes most of its home appreciation to this circumstance. Mr. Talfourd's play has, itself, little truly dramatic, with much picturesque and more poetical value; its author,

nevertheless, is better entitled to respect as a dramatist than as a critic of dramas. "Velasco," compared with American tragedies generally, is a good tragedy—indeed, an excellent one, but, positively considered, its merits are very inconsiderable. It has many of the traits of Mrs. Mowatt's "Fashion," to which, in its mode of construction, its scenic effects, and several other points, it bears as close a resemblance as, in the nature of things, it could very well bear. It is by no means improbable, however, that Mrs. Mowatt received some assistance from Mr. Sargent in the composition of her comedy, or at least was guided by his advice in many particulars of technicality.

"Shells and Sea-Weeds," a series of brief poems, recording the incidents of a voyage to Cuba, is, I think, the best work in verse of its author, and evinces a fine fancy, with keen appreciation of the beautiful in natural scenery. Mr. Sargent is fond of sea-pieces, and paints them with skill, flooding them with that warmth and geniality which are their character and their due. "A Life on the Ocean Wave," has attained great popularity, but is by no means so good as the less lyrical compositions, "A Calm," "The Gale," "Tropical Weather," and "A Night Storm at Sea."

"The Light of the Light-House" is a spirited poem, with many musical and fanciful passages, well expressed. For example—

> But, oh, Aurora's crimson light,
> That makes the watch-fire dim,

Is not a more transporting sight
Than Ellen is to him.
He pineth not for fields and brooks,
Wild flowers and singing birds,
For summer smileth in her looks
And singeth in her words.

There is something of the Dibdin spirit throughout the poem, and, indeed, throughout all the sea poems of Mr. Sargent—a little *too much* of it, perhaps.

His prose is not quite so meritorious as his poetry. He writes "easily," and is apt at burlesque and sarcasm—both rather broad than original. Mr. Sargent has an excellent memory for good *hits*, and no little dexterity in their application. To those who meddle little with books, some of his satirical papers must appear brilliant. In a word, he is one of the most prominent members of a very extensive American family—the men of industry, talent and tact.

In stature he is short—not more than five feet five—but well proportioned. His face is a fine one; the features regular and expressive. His demeanor is very gentlemanly. Unmarried, and about thirty years of age.

FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD.

Mrs. OSGOOD, for the last three or four years, has been rapidly attaining distinction; and this, evidently, with no effort at attaining it. She seems, in fact, to have no object in view beyond that of giving voice to the fancies

or the feelings of the moment. "Necessity," says the proverb, "is the mother of invention"; and the invention of Mrs. O., at least, springs plainly from necessity—from the necessity of invention. *Not* to write poetry—not to act it, think it, dream it, and be it, is entirely out of her power.

It may be questioned whether with more industry, more method, more definite purpose, more ambition, Mrs. Osgood would have made a more decided impression on the public mind. She might, upon the whole, have written better poems; but the chances are that she would have failed in conveying so vivid and so just an idea of her powers as a poet. The warm *abandonnement* of her style—that charm which now so captivates—is but a portion and a consequence of her unworldly nature—of her disregard of mere fame; but it affords us glimpses, which we could not otherwise have obtained, of a capacity for accomplishing what she has not accomplished, and in all probability never will. In the world of poetry, however, there is already more than enough of uncongenial ambition and pretence.

Mrs. Osgood has taken no care whatever of her literary fame. A great number of her finest compositions, both in verse and prose, have been written anonymously, and are now lying *perdus* about the country, in out-of-the-way nooks and corners. Many a goodly reputation has been reared upon a far more unstable basis than her unclaimed and uncollected "fugitive pieces."

Her first volume, I believe, was published, seven or eight years ago, by Edward Churton, of London, during the residence of the poetess in that city. I have now lying before me a second edition of it, dated 1842—a beautifully printed book, dedicated to the Reverend Hobard Caunter. It contains a number of what the Bostonians call "juvenile" poems, written when Mrs. O. (then Miss Locke) could not have been more than thirteen, and evincing unusual precocity. The leading piece is "Elfrida, a Dramatic Poem," but in many respects well entitled to the appellation, "drama." I allude chiefly to the passionate expression of particular portions, to delineation of character, and to occasional scenic effect:—in construction, or plot—in general conduct and plausibility, the play fails; comparatively, of course—for the hand of genius is evinced throughout.

The story is the well-known one of Edgar, Elfrida, and Earl Athelwood. The king, hearing of Elfrida's extraordinary beauty, commissions his favorite, Athelwood, to visit her and ascertain if report speaks truly of her charms. The earl, becoming himself enamored, represents the lady as any thing but beautiful or agreeable. The king is satisfied. Athelwood soon after woos and weds Elfrida—giving Edgar to understand that the heiress' wealth is the object. The true state of the case, however, is betrayed by an enemy; and the monarch resolves to visit the earl at his castle and to judge for himself. Hearing of this resolve, Athelwood, in despair, confesses to his wife his

duplicity, and entreats her to render null as far as possible the effect of her charms by dressing with unusual plainness. This the wife promises to do; but, fired with ambition and resentment at the wrong done her, arrays herself in her most magnificent and becoming costume. The king is charmed, and the result is the destruction of Athelwood, and the elevation of Elfrida to the throne.

These incidents are well adapted to dramatic purposes, and with more of that art which Mrs. Osgood does *not* possess, she might have woven them into a tragedy which the world would not willingly let die. As it is, she has merely succeeded in showing what she might, should, and could have done, and yet, unhappily, did not.

The character of Elfrida is the bright point of the play. Her beauty and consciousness of it—her indignation and uncompromising ambition—are depicted with power. There is a fine blending of the poetry of passion and the passion of poetry, in the lines which follow:

—— Why even now he bends
In courtly reverence to some mincing dame
Haply the star of Edgar's festival,
While I, with this high heart and queenly form,
Pine in neglect and solitude. Shall it *be?*
Shall I not rend my fetters and be free?
Ay!—be the cooing turtle-dove content,
Safe in her own loved nest!—the eagle soars
On restless plumes to meet the imperial sun.
And Edgar is my day-star, in whose light
This heart's proud wings shall yet be furled to rest.
Why wedded I with Athelwood? For this?
No!—even at the altar when I stood—
My hand in his, his gaze upon my cheek—

I did forget his presence and the scene ;
A gorgeous vision rose before mine eyes
Of power and pomp and regal pageantry ;
A king was at my feet and, as he knelt,
I smiled and, turning, met—a husband's kiss.
But still I smiled—for in my guilty soul
I blessed him as the being by whose means
I should be brought within my idol's sphere—
My haughty, glorious, brave, impassioned Edgar !
Well I remember when these wondering eyes
Beheld him first. I was a maiden then—
A dreaming child—but from that thrilling hour
I've been a queen in visions !

Very similar, but even more glowing, is the love-inspired eloquence of Edgar—

Earth hath no language, love, befitting thee ;
For its own children it hath pliant speech ;
And mortals know to call a blossom fair,
A wavelet graceful, and a jewel rich ;
But thou !—oh, teach me, sweet, the angel tongue
They talked in Heaven ere thou didst leave its bowers
To bloom below !

To this Elfrida replies—

If Athelwood should hear thee !

And to this, Edgar—

Name not the felon knave to me, Elfrida !
My soul is flame whene'er I think of him.
Thou lovest him not ?—oh, *say* thou dost not love him !

The answer of Elfrida at this point is profoundly true to nature, and would alone suffice to assure any critic of Mrs. Osgood's dramatic talent.

When but a child I saw thee in my dreams !

The woman's soul here shrinks from the direct avowal of want of love for her husband, and flies to poetry and appeals to fate, by way of excusing that infidelity which is at once her glory and her shame.

In general, the "situations" of "Elfrida" are improbable or ultra-romantic, and its incidents unconsequential, seldom furthering the business of the play. The *dénouement* is feeble, and its moral of very equivocal tendency indeed—but I have already shown that it is the especial office neither of poetry nor of the drama, to inculcate truth, unless incidentally. Mrs. Osgood, however, although she has unquestionably failed in writing a good play, has, even in failing, given indication of dramatic power. The great tragic element, passion, breathes in every line of her composition, and had she but the art, or the patience, to model or control it, she might be eminently successful as a playwright. I am justified in these opinions not only by "Elfrida," but by "Woman's Trust, a Dramatic Sketch," included, also, in the English edition.

A Masked Ball. Madelon and a Stranger in a Recess.

Mad.—Why hast thou led me here?
My friends may deem it strange—unmaidenly,
This lonely converse with an unknown mask.
Yet in thy voice there is a thrilling power
That makes me love to linger. It is like
The tone of one far distant—only his
Was gayer and more soft.

Strang. Sweet Madelon!
Say thou wilt smile upon the passionate love
That thou alone canst waken! Let me hope!

Mad.—Hush! hush! I may not hear thee. Know'st thou not
I am betrothed?

Strang.—Alas! too well I know;
But I could tell thee such a tale of him—
Thine early love—'t would fire those timid eyes
With lightning pride and anger—curl that lip—
That gentle lip to passionate contempt
For man's light falsehood. Even now he bends—
Thy Rupert bends o 'er one as fair as thou,
In fond affection. Even now his heart—

Mad.—Doth my eye flash?—doth my lip curl with scorn?
'T is scorn of thee, thou perjured stranger, not—
Oh, not of him, the generous and the true!
Hast thou e'er seen my Rupert?—hast thou met
Those proud and fearless eyes that never quailed,
As Falsehood quails, before another's glance—
As thine even now are shrinking from mine own—
The spirit beauty of that open brow—
The noble head—the free and gallant step—
The lofty mien whose majesty is won
From inborn honor—hast thou seen all this?
And darest thou speak of faithlessness and him
In the same idle breath? Thou little know'st
The strong confiding of a woman's heart,
When woman loves as—I do. Speak no more!

Strang.—Deluded girl! I tell thee he is false—
False as yon fleeting cloud!

Mad. True as the sun!

Strang.—The very wind less wayward than his heart!

Mad.—The forest oak less firm! He loved me not
For the frail rose-hues and the fleeting light
Of youthful loveliness—ah, many a cheek
Of softer bloom, and many a dazzling eye
More rich than mine may win my wanderer's gaze.
He loved me for my love, the deep, the fond—
For my unfaltering truth; he cannot find—
Rove where he will—a heart that beats for him

With such intense, absorbing tenderness—
Such idolizing constancy as mine.
Why should he change, then?—I am still the same.

Strang.—Sweet infidel! *wilt* thou have ruder proof?
Rememberest thou a little golden case
Thy Rupert wore, in which a gem was shrined?
A gem I would not barter for a world—
An angel face; its *sunny wealth of hair*
In radiant ripples bathed the graceful throat
And dimpled shoulders; round the rosy curve
Of the sweeth mouth a smile seemed wandering ever,
While in the depths of azure fire that gleamed
Beneath the drooping lashes slept a world
Of eloquent meaning, passionate yet pure—
Dreamy—subdued—but oh, how beautiful!
A look of timid, pleading tenderness
That should have been a talisman to charm
His restless heart for aye. Rememberest thou?

Mad.—(*Impatiently.*) I do—I do remember—'t was my own.
He prized it as his life—I gave it him—
What of it!—speak!

Strang.—(*Showing a miniature.*) Lady, behold that gift!

Mad.—(*Clasping her hands.*) Merciful Heaven! is my Rupert dead
(*After a pause, during which she seems overwhelmed with agony*)
How died he?—when?—oh, *thou* wast by his side
In that last hour and *I* was far away!
My blessed love!—give me that token!—speak!
What messsage sent he to his Madelon?

Strang.—(*Supporting her and strongly agitated.*)
He is not dead, dear lady!—grieve not thus!

Mad.—He is not false, sir stranger!

Strang. For thy sake,
Would he were worthier! One other proof
I 'll give thee, loveliest! if thou lov'st him still,
I 'll not believe thee woman. Listen, then!
A faithful lover breathes not of his bliss
To other ears. Wilt hear a fable, lady?

Here the stranger details some incidents of the first wooing of Madelon by Rupert, and concludes with—

Lady, my task is o'er—dost doubt me still?

Mad.—Doubt thee, my Rupert! ah, I know thee now.
Fling by that hateful mask!—let me unclasp it!
No! thou wouldst *not* betray thy Madelon.

The "Miscellaneous Poems" of the volume—many of them written in childhood—are, of course, various in character and merit. "The Dying Rosebud's Lament," although by no means one of the best, will very well serve to show the earlier and most characteristic manner of the poetess:

Ah, me!—ah woe is me
That I should perish now,
With the dear sunlight just let in
Upon my balmy brow.

My leaves, instinct with glowing life,
Were quivering to unclose;
My happy heart with love was rife—
I was almost a rose.

Nerved by a hope, warm, rich, intense,
Already I had risen
Above my cage's curving fence—
My green and graceful prison.

My pouting lips, by Zephyr pressed,
Were just prepared to part,
And whispered to the wooing wind
The rapture of my heart.

In new-born fancies revelling,
My mossy cell half riven,
Each thrilling leaflet seemed a wing
To bear me into Heaven.

How oft, while yet *an infant-flower*
My crimson cheek I 've laid
Againse the green bars of my bower,
Impatient of the shade ;

And, pressing up and peeping through
Its small but precious vistas,
Sighed for the lovely light and dew
That blessed my elder sisters !

I saw the *sweet breeze rippling* o'er
Their leaves that loved the play,
Though the light thief stole all the store
Of dew-drop gems away.

I thought how happy I should be
Such diamond wreaths to wear,
And frolic with a rose's glee
With sunbeam, bird, and air.

Ah, me !—ah, woe is me, that I,
Ere yet my leaves unclose,
With all my wealth of sweets *must die*
Before I am a rose !

The poetical reader will agree with me that few things have ever been written (by any poet, at any age) more delicately fanciful than the passages italicized—and yet they are the work of a girl not more than fourteen years of age. The clearness and force of expression, and the nice appositeness of the overt and insinuated meaning, are, when we consider the youth of the writer, even more remarkable than the fancy.

I cannot speak of Mrs. Osgood's poems without a strong propensity to ring the changes upon the indefinite word "grace" and its derivatives. About every thing she writes we perceive this indescribable charm—of which,

perhaps, the elements are a vivid fancy and a quick sense of the proportionate. Grace, however, may be most satisfactorily defined as "a term applied, in despair, to that class of the expressions of Beauty which admit of no analysis." It is in this irresoluble effect that Mrs. Osgood excels any poetess of her country—and it is to this easily appreciable effect that her *popularity* is owing. Nor is she more graceful herself than a lover of the graceful, under whatever guise it is presented to her consideration. The sentiment renders itself manifest, in innumerable instances, as well throughout her prose as her poetry. Whatever be her theme, she at once *extorts* from it its whole essentiality of *grace*. Fanny Ellsler has been often lauded; true poets have sung her praises; but we look in vain for any thing written about her, which so distinctly and vividly paints her to the eye as the half dozen quatrains which follow. They are to be found in the English volume:

She comes!—the spirit of the dance!
And but for those large eloquent eyes,
Where passion speaks in every glance,
She 'd seem a wanderer from the skies.

So light that, *gazing breathless there,*
Lest the celestial dream should go,
You 'd think the music in the air
Waved the fair vision to and fro.

Or think the melody's sweet flow
Within the radiant creature played,
And those soft wreathing arms of snow
And white sylph feet the music made.

Now gliding slow with dreamy grace,
  Her eyes beneath their lashes lost,
Now motionless, with lifted face,
  And small hands on her bosom crossed.

And now with flashing eyes she springs—
  Her whole bright figure raised in air,
As if her soul had spread its wings
And poised her one wild instant there!

She spoke not—but, so richly fraught
  With language are her glance and smile,
That when the curtain fell, I thought
  She had been talking all the while.

This is, indeed, poetry—and of the most unquestionable kind—poetry *truthful* in the proper sense—that is to say, breathing of nature. There is here nothing forced or artificial—no hardly sustained enthusiasm. The poetess speaks because she feels; but then *what* she feels is felt only by the truly poetical. The thought in the last line of the quatrain will not be so fully appreciated by the reader as it should be; for latterly it has been imitated, plagiarized, repeated *ad infinitum*:—but the other passages italicized have still left them all their original effect. The idea in the two last lines is exquisitely *näive* and natural; that in the two last lines of the second quatrain, beautiful beyond measure; that of the whole fifth quatrain, *magnificent*—unsurpassed in the entire compass of American poetry. It is instinct with the noblest poetical requisite—imagination.

Of the same trait I find, to my surprise, one of the best exemplifications among the "Juvenile Rhymes."

For Fancy is a fairy that can hear,
Ever, the melody of Nature's voice
And see all lovely visions that she will.
She drew *a picture of a beauteous bird*
With plumes of radiant green and gold inwoven,
Banished from its beloved resting place,
And fluttering in vain hope from tree to tree,
And bade us think how, like it, the sweet season
From one bright shelter to another fled—
First from the maple waved her emerald pinions,
But lingered still upon the oak and elm,
Till, frightened by rude breezes even from them,
With mournful sigh she moaned her sad farewell.

The little poem called "The Music Box" has been as widely circulated as any of Mrs. Osgood's compositions. The melody and harmony of this *jeu d'esprit* are perfect, and there is in it a rich tint of that epigrammatism for which the poetess is noted. Some of the *intentional* epigrams interspersed through the works are peculiarly happy. Here is one which, while replete with the rarest "spirit of point," is yet something more than pointed:

TO AN ATHEIST POET.

Lovest thou the music of the sea?
Callest thou the sunshine bright?
His voice is more than melody—
His smile is more than light.

Here again is something very similar:

Fanny shuts her smiling eyes,
Then because she cannot see,
Thoughtless simpleton! she cries:
"Ah! you can't see me."

Fanny 's like the sinner vain
Who, with spirit shut and dim,

Thinks, because he sees not Heaven,
Heaven beholds not him.

Is it not a little surprising, however, that a writer capable of so much precision and finish as the author of these epigrams *must* be, should have failed to see how much of force is lost in the inversion of "the sinner vain"? Why not have written "Fanny's like the silly sinner"?—or, if "silly" be thought too jocose, "the blinded sinner"? The rhythm, at the same time, would thus be much improved by bringing the lines,

Fanny's like the silly sinner,
Thinks because he sees not Heaven,

into *exact* equality.

In mingled epigrams and *espieglerie* Mrs. Osgood is even more especially at home. I have seldom seen any thing in this way more happily done than the song entitled "If He Can."

"The Unexpected Declaration" is, perhaps, even a finer specimen of the same manner. It is one of that class of compositions which Mrs. Osgood has made almost exclusively her own. Had I seen it without her name, I should have had no hesitation in ascribing it to her; for there is no other person—in America certainly—who does any thing of a similar kind with any thing like a similar piquancy.

The point of this poem, however, might have been sharpened, and the polish increased in lustre, by the application of the emory of brevity. From what the lover says

much might well have been omitted; and I should have preferred leaving out altogether the autorial comments; for the story is fully told without them. The "Why do you weep?" "Why do you frown?" and "Why do you smile?" supply all the imagination requires; to supply *more* than it requires, oppresses and offends it. Nothing more deeply grieves it—or more vexes the true taste in general, than *hyperism* of any kind. In Germany, *Wohlgeborn* is a loftier title than *Edelgeborn;* and in Greece, the thrice-victorious at the Olympic games could claim a statue of the size of life, while he who had conquered but once was entitled *only* to a colossal one.

The English collection of which I speak was entitled "A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England." It met with a *really* cordial reception in Great Britain—was favorably noticed by the *Literary Gazette*, *Times*, *Atlas*, *Monthly Chronicle*, and especially by the *Court Journal*, *The Court and Ladies' Magazine*, *La Belle Assemblée*, and other similar works. "We have long been familiar," says the high authority of the *Literary Gazette*, "with the name of our fair author * * * Our expectations have been fulfilled, and we have here a delightful gathering of the sweetest of wild flowers, all looking as fresh and beautiful as if they had grown in the richest of English pasture in place of having been 'nursed by the cataract.' True, the wreath might have been improved with a little more care—a trifling attention or two paid to the formation of it. A stalk here and there that obtrudes

itself between the bells of the flowers, might have become so interwoven as to have been concealed, and the whole have looked as if it had grown in that perfect and beautiful form. Though, after all, we are perhaps too chary; for in nature every leaf is not ironed out to a form, nor propped up with a wiry precision, but blown and ruffled by the refreshing breezes, and looking as careless and easy and unaffected as a child that bounds along with its silken locks tossed to and fro just as the wind uplifts them. Page after page of this volume have we perused with a feeling of pleasure and admiration." The *Court Journal* more emphatically says: "Her wreath is one of violets, sweet-scented, pure, and modest; so lovely that the hand that wove it should not neglect additionally to enrich it by turning her love and kindness to things of larger beauty. Some of the smaller lyrics in the volume are *perfectly* beautiful—beautiful in their chaste and exquisite simplicity and the perfect elegance of their composition." In fact, there was *that* about "The Wreath of Wild Flowers"—that inexpressible *grace* of thought and manner—which never fails to find ready echo in the hearts of the aristocracy and refinement of Great Britain;—and it was here especially that Mrs. Osgood found welcome. Her husband's merits as an artist had already introduced her into distinguished society, (she was petted, in especial, by Mrs. Norton and Rogers,) but the publication of her poems had at once an evidently favorable effect upon his fortunes. His pictures were placed in a most advan-

tageous light by her poetical and conversational ability.

Messrs. Clarke and Austin, of New York, have lately issued another, but still a very incomplete collection of "Poems by Frances S. Osgood." In general, it includes by no means the best of her works. "The Daughter of Herodias"—one of her longest compositions, and a very noble poem, putting me in mind of the best efforts of Mrs. Hemans—is omitted; it is included, however, in the last edition of Dr. Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America." In Messrs. C. and A.'s collection there occur, too, very many of those half sentimental, half allegorical compositions of which, at one period, the authoress seemed to be particularly fond—for the reason, perhaps, that they afforded her good opportunity for the exercise of her ingenuity and epigrammatic talent:—no poet, however, can admit them to be poetry at all. Still, the volume contains some pieces which enable us to take a new view of the powers of the writer. A few additional years, with their inevitable sorrow, appeared to have stirred the depths of her *heart*. We see less of frivolity—less of vivacity—more of tenderness—earnestness—even passion—and far more of the true imagination as distinguished from its subordinate, fancy. The one prevalent trait, *grace*, alone distinctly remains. "The Spirit of Poetry," "To Sybil," "The Birth of the Callitriche," and "The Child and its Angel-Playmate," would do honor to any of our poets. "She Loves Him Yet," nevertheless, will serve, better than either of these poems, to show the alteration of man-

ner referred to. It is not only rhythmically perfect but it evinces much originality in its structure. The verses commencing, "Yes, lower to the level," are in a somewhat similar tone, but are more noticeable for their terse energy of expression.

In not presenting to the public at one view all that she has written in verse, Mrs. Osgood has incurred the risk of losing that credit to which she is entitled on the score of versatility—of variety in invention and expression. There is scarcely a form of poetical composition in which she has not made experiment; and there is none in which she has not very happily succeeded. Her defects are chiefly negative and by no means numerous. Her versification is sometimes exceedingly good, but more frequently feeble through the use of harsh consonants, and such words as "*thou 'dst*" for "*thou wouldst*," with other unnecessary contractions, inversions, and obsolete expressions. Her imagery is often mixed;—indeed it is rarely otherwise. The epigrammatism of her conclusions gives to her poems, as wholes, the air of being more skilfully constructed than they really are. On the other hand, we look in vain throughout her works for an offence against the finer taste, or against decorum—for a low thought or a platitude. A happy refinement—an instinct of the pure and delicate—is one of the most noticeable excellencies. She may be properly commended, too, for originality of poetic invention, whether in the conception of a theme or in the manner of treating it. Consequences of this trait are her point

and piquancy. Fancy and *näiveté* appear in all she writes. Regarding the loftier merits, I am forced to speak of her in more measured terms. She has occasional passages of true imagination—but scarcely the glowing, vigorous, and *sustained* ideality of Mrs. Maria Brooks—or even, in general, the less ethereal elevation of Mrs. Welby. In that indescribable something, however, which, for want of a more definite term, we are accustomed to call "grace" —that charm so magical, because at once so shadowy and so potent—that Will o' the Wisp which, in its *supreme* development, may be said to involve nearly *all* that is valuable in poetry—she has, unquestionably, no rival among her countrywomen.

Of pure prose—of prose proper—she has, perhaps, never written a line in her life. Her usual magazine papers are a class by themselves. She begins with a resolute effort at being sedate—that is to say, sufficiently prosaic and matter-of-fact for the purpose of a legend or an essay; but, after a few sentences, we behold uprising the leaven of the Muse; then with a flourish and some vain attempts at repression, a scrap of verse renders itself manifest; then comes a little poem outright; then another and another and another, with impertinent patches of prose in between—until at length the mask is thrown fairly off and far away and the whole article—sings.

Upon the whole, I have spoken of Mrs. Osgood so much in detail, less on account of what she has actually done than on account of what I perceive in her the ability to do.

In character she is ardent, sensitive, impulsive—the very soul of truth and honor; a worshipper of the beautiful, with a heart so radically artless as to seem abundant in art; universally admired, respected, and beloved. In person, she is about the medium height, slender even to fragility, graceful whether in action or repose; complexion usually pale; hair black and glossy; eyes a clear, luminous gray, large, and with singular capacity for expression.

LYDIA M. CHILD.

Mrs. CHILD has acquired a just celebrity by many compositions of high merit, the most noticeable of which are "Hobomok," "Philothea," and a "History of the Condition of Women." "Philothea," in especial, is written with great vigor, and, as a classical romance, is not far inferior to the "Anacharsis" of Barthelemi;—its style is a model for purity, chastity, and ease. Some of her magazine papers are distinguished for grace and brilliant *imagination*—a quality rarely noticed in our country-women She continues to write a great deal for the monthlies and other journals, and invariably writes well. Poetry she has not often attempted, but I make no doubt that in this she would excel. It seems, indeed, the legitimate province of her fervid and fanciful nature. I quote one of her shorter compositions, as well to instance (from the subject) her intense appreciation of genius in others as to exemplify the force of her poetic expression:—

MARIUS AMID THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE.

Pillars are fallen at thy feet,
Fanes quiver in the air,
A prostrate city is thy seat,
And thou alone art there.

No change comes o'er thy noble brow,
Though ruin is around thee ;
Thine eyebeam burns as proudly now
As when the laurel crowned thee.

It cannot bend thy lofty soul
Though friends and fame depart—
The car of Fate may o'er thee roll
Nor crush thy Roman heart.

And genius hath electric power
Which earth can never tame ;
Bright suns may scorch and dark clouds lower,
Its flash is still the same.

The dreams we loved in early life
May melt like mist away ;
High thoughts may seem, 'mid passion's strife,
Like Carthage in decay.

And proud hopes in the human heart
May be to ruin hurled,
Like mouldering monuments of art
Heaped on a sleeping world ;

Yet there is something will not die
Where life hath once been fair ;
Some towering thoughts still rear on high,
Some Roman lingers there.

Mrs. Child, casually observed, has nothing particularly striking in personal appearance. One would pass her in the street a dozen times without notice. She is low in stature and slightly framed. Her complexion is florid ; eyes

and hair are dark; features in general diminutive. The expression of her countenance, when animated, is highly intellectual. Her dress is usually plain, not even neat—any thing but fashionable. Her bearing needs excitement to impress it with life and dignity. She is of that order of beings who are themselves only on "great occasions." Her husband is still living. She has no children. I need scarcely add that she has always been distinguished for her energetic and active philanthropy.

THOMAS DUNN BROWN.

I have seen one or two scraps of verse with this gentleman's *nom de plume* * appended, which had considerable merit. For example:

A sound melodious shook the breeze
  When thy belovëd name was heard:
  Such was the music in the word
  Its dainty rhythm the pulses stirred,
But passed forever joys like these.
  There is no joy, no light, no day,
  But black despair and night *al-way*
    And thickening gloom:
And this, Azthene, is my doom.

Was it for this, for weary years,
  I strove among the sons of men,
  And by *the magic of my pen*—
  Just sorcery—walked the lion's den
Of slander void of tears and fears—
  And all for thee? For thee!—alas,
  As is the image on a glass

* Thomas Dunn English.

So baseless *seems*,
Azthene, all my early *dreams*.

I must confess, however, that I do not appreciate the "dainty rhythm" of such a word as "Azthene," and, perhaps, there is some taint of egotism in the passage about "the magic" of Mr. BROWN'S pen. Let us be charitable, however, and set all this down under the head of the pure imagination or invention—the first of poetical requisities. The *inexcusable* sin of Mr. Brown is imitation—if this be not too mild a term. When Barry Cornwall, for example, sings about a "dainty rhythm," Mr. Brown forthwith, in B flat, hoots about it too. He has taken, however, his most unwarrantable liberties in the way of plagiarism with Mr. Henry B. Hirst, of Philadelphia—a poet whose merits have not yet been properly estimated.

I place Mr. Brown, to be sure, on my list of literary people not on account of his poetry (which I presume he himself is not weak enough to estimate very highly), but on the score of his having edited, for several months, "with the aid of numerous collaborators," a magazine called *The Aristidean*. This work, although professedly a "monthly," was issued at irregular intervals, and was unfortunate, I fear, in not attaining at any period more than about fifty subscribers.

Mr. Brown has at least that amount of talent which would enable him to succeed in his father's profession—that of a ferryman on the Schuylkill—but the fate of *The Aristidean* should indicate to him that, to prosper in

any higher walk of life, he must apply himself to study. No spectacle can be more ludicrous than that of a man without the commonest school education, busying himself in attempts to instruct mankind on topics of polite literature. The absurdity, in such cases, does not lie merely in the ignorance displayed by the would-be instructor, but in the transparency of the shifts by which he endeavors to keep this ignorance concealed. The editor of *The Aristidean*, for example, was not the public laughing-stock throughout the five months of his magazine's existence, so much on account of writing "lay" for "lie," "went" for "gone," "set" for "sit," etc. etc., or for coupling nouns in the plural with verbs in the singular—as when he writes, above,

> —— so baseless *seems*
> Azthene, all my earthly *dreams*—

he was not, I say, laughed at *so much* on account of his excusable deficiencies in English grammar (although an editor should undoubtedly be able to write *his own name*) as on account of the pertinacity with which he exposed his weakness, in lamenting the "typographical blunders" which so unluckily *would* creep into his work. He should have reflected that there is not in all America a proof-reader so blind as to permit *such* errors to escape him. The rhyme, for instance, in the matter of the "dreams" that "seems," would have distinctly shown even the most uneducated printers' devil that he, the devil, had no right to meddle with so obviously an *intentional* peculiarity.

Were I writing merely for American readers, I should not, of course, have introduced Mr. Brown's name in this book. With us, *grotesqueries* such as *The Aristidean* and its editor are not altogether unparalleled, and are sufficiently well understood—but my purpose is to convey to foreigners some idea of a condition of literary affairs among us, which otherwise they might find it difficult to comprehend or to conceive. That Mr. Brown's blunders are really such as I have described them—that I have not distorted their character or exaggerated their grossness in any respect—that there existed in New York for some months, as conductor of a magazine that called itself *the organ of the Tyler party*, and was even mentioned, at times, by respectable papers, a man who obviously *never went to school*, and was so profoundly ignorant as not to know that he could not spell—are serious and positive facts—uncolored in the slightest degree—demonstrable, in a word, upon the spot, by reference to almost any editorial sentence upon any page of the magazine in question. But a single instance will suffice:—Mr. Hirst, in one of his poems has the lines,

> O Odin! 't was pleasure—'t was passion to see
> Her serfs sweep like wolves on a lambkin like me.

At page 200 of *The Aristidean* for September, 1845, Mr. Brown, commenting on the English of the passage, says:—"This lambkin might have used better language than '*like me*'—unless he intended it for a specimen of choice Choctaw, when it may, for all we know to the con-

trary, pass muster." It is needless, I presume, to proceed farther in a search for the most direct proof possible or conceivable, of the ignorance of Mr. Brown—who, in similar cases, invariably writes—"like I."

In an editorial announcement on page 242 of the same "number," he says:—"This and the three succeeding *numbers brings* the work up to January, and with the two *numbers* previously published *makes* up a volume or half year of *numbers*." But enough of this absurdity:—Mr. Brown had, for the motto on his magazine cover, the words of Richelieu,

——— Men call me cruel;
I am not:—I am *just*.

Here the two monosyllables "an ass" should have been appended. They were no doubt omitted through "one of those d——d typographical blunders" which, through life, have been at once the bane and the antidote of Mr. Brown.

I make these remarks in no spirit of unkindness. Mr. B. is yet young—certainly not more than thirty-eight or nine—and might readily improve himself at points where he is most defective. No one of any generosity would think the worse of him for getting private instruction.

I do not personally know him. About his appearance there is nothing very remarkable—except that he exists in a perpetual state of vacillation between mustachio and goatee. In character, a *windbeutel*.

ELIZABETH BOGART.

Miss BOGART has been for many years before the public as a writer of poems and tales (principally the former) for the periodicals, having made her *debût* as a contributor to the original *New York Mirror*. Dr. Griswold, in a foot-note appended to one of her poems quoted in his "Poets and Poetry," speaks of the "volume" from which he quotes; but Miss Bogart has not yet collected her writings in volume form. Her fugitive pieces have usually been signed "Estelle." They are noticeable for nerve, dignity, and finish. Perhaps the four stanzas entitled "He Came too Late," and introduced into Dr. Griswold's volume, are the most favorable specimen of her manner. Had he not quoted them I should have copied them here.

Miss Bogart is a member of one of the oldest families in the State. An interesting sketch of her progenitors is to be found in Thompson's "History of Long Island." She is about the medium height, straight and slender; black hair and eyes; countenance full of vivacity and intelligence. She converses with fluency and spirit, enunciates distinctly, and exhibits interest in whatever is addressed to her—a rare quality in good talkers; has a keen appreciation of genius and of natural scenery; is cheerful and fond of society.

CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK.

Miss SEDGWICK is not only one of our most celebrated

and most meritorious writers, but attained reputation at a period when *American* reputation in letters was regarded as a phenomenon ; and thus, like Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Bryant, Halleck, and one or two others, she is indebted, certainly, for *some* portion of the esteem in which she was and is held, to that patriotic pride and gratitude to which I have already alluded, and for which we must make reasonable allowance in estimating the absolute merit of our literary pioneers.

Her earliest published work of any length was "A New England Tale," designed in the first place as a religious tract, but expanding itself into a volume of considerable size. Its success—partially owing, perhaps, to the influence of the parties for whom or at whose instigation it was written—encouraged the author to attempt a novel of somewhat greater elaborateness, as well as length, and "Redwood" was soon announced, establishing her at once as the first female prose writer of her country. It was reprinted in England, and translated, I believe, into French and Italian. "Hope Leslie" next appeared—also a novel —and was more favorably received even than its predecessors. Afterward came "Clarence," not quite so successful, and then "The Linwoods," which took rank in the public esteem with "Hope Leslie." These are all of her longer prose fictions, but she has written numerous shorter ones of great merit—such as "The Rich Poor Man and the Poor Rich Man," "Live and Let Live" (both in volume form), with various articles for the maga-

zines and annuals, to which she is still an industrious contributor. About ten years since she published a compilation of several of her fugitive prose pieces, under the title "Tales and Sketches," and a short time ago a series of "Letters from Abroad"—not the least popular or least meritorious of her compositions.

Miss Sedgwick has now and then been nicknamed "the Miss Edgeworth of America"; but she has done nothing to bring down upon her the vengeance of so equivocal a title. That she has thoroughly studied and profoundly admired Miss Edgeworth may, indeed, be gleaned from her works—but what woman has not? Of imitation there is not the slightest perceptible taint. In both authors we observe the same tone of thoughtful morality, but here all resemblance ceases. In the Englishwoman there is far more of a certain Scotch prudence, in the American more of warmth, tenderness, sympathy for the weaknesses of her sex. Miss Edgeworth is the more acute, the more inventive, and the more rigid. Miss Sedgwick the more womanly.

All her stories are full of interest. The "New England Tale" and "Hope Leslie" are especially so, but upon the whole I am best pleased with "The Linwoods." Its prevailing features are ease, purity of style, pathos, and verisimilitude. To plot it has little pretension. The scene is in America, and, as the sub-title indicates, "sixty years since." This, by the by, is taken from "Waverley." The adventures of the family of a Mr. Linwood, a resident of

New York, form the principal theme. The character of this gentleman is happily drawn, although there is an antagonism between the initial and concluding touches—the end has forgotten the beginning, like the government of Trinculo. Mr. L. has two children, Herbert and Isabella. Being himself a Tory, the boyish impulses of his son in favor of the revolutionists are watched with anxiety and vexation; and on the breaking out of the war, Herbert, positively refusing to drink the king's health, is expelled from home by his father—an event on which hinges the main interest of the narrative. Isabella is the heroine proper, full of generous impulses, beautiful, intellectual, *spirituelle*—indeed, a most fascinating creature. But the family of a Widow Lee throws quite a charm over all the book—a matronly, pious and devoted mother, yielding up her son to the cause of her country—the son gallant, chivalrous, yet thoughtful; a daughter, gentle, loving, melancholy, and susceptible of light impressions. This daughter, Bessie Lee, is one of the most effective personations to be found in our fictitious literature, and may lay claims to the distinction of originality—no slight distinction where *character* is concerned. It is the old story, to be sure, of a meek and trusting heart broken by treachery and abandonment, but in the narration of Miss Sedgwick it breaks upon us with all the freshness of novel emotion. Deserted by her lover, an accomplished and aristocratical coxcomb, the spirits of the gentle girl sink gradually from trust to simple hope, from hope to anxiety, from anxiety

to doubt, from doubt to melancholy, and from melancholy to madness. The gradation is depicted in a masterly manner. She escapes from her home in New England and endeavors to make her way alone to New York, with the object of restoring to him who had abandoned her, some tokens he had given her of his love—an act which her disordered fancy assures her will effect in her own person a disenthralment from passion. Her piety, her madness, and her beauty, stand her in stead of the lion of Una, and she reaches the city in safety. In that portion of the narrative which embodies this journey are some passages which no mind unimbued with the purest spirit of poetry could have conceived, and they have often made me wonder why Miss Sedgwick has never written a poem.

I have already alluded to her usual excellence of style; but she has a very peculiar fault—that of discrepancy between the words and character of the speaker—the fault, indeed, more properly belongs to the depicting of character itself.

For example, at page 38, vol. 1, of "The Linwoods":—

"No more of my contempt for the Yankees, Hal, an' thou lovest me," replied Jasper. "You remember Æsop's advice to Crœsus at the Persian court?"

"No, I am sure I do not. You have the most provoking way of resting the lever by which you bring out your own knowledge, on your friend's ignorance."

Now all this is pointed (although the last sentence would have been improved by letting the words "on your friend's

ignorance" come immediately after "resting"), but it is by no means the language of school-boys—and such are the speakers.

Again, at page 226, vol. 1 of the same novel:—

"Now, out on you, you lazy, slavish loons!" cried Rose. "Cannot you see these men are raised up to fight for freedom for more than themselves? If the chain be broken at one end, the links will fall apart sooner or later. When you see the sun on the mountain top, you may be sure it will shine into the deepest valleys before long."

Who would suppose this graceful eloquence to proceed from the mouth of a negro woman? Yet such is Rose.

Again, at page 24, vol. 1, same novel:—

"True, I never saw her; but I tell you, young lad, that there is such a thing as seeing the shadow of things far distant and past, and never seeing the realities, though they it be that cast the shadows."

Here the speaker is an old woman who, a few sentences before, has been boasting of her proficiency in "*tellin' fortins.*"

I might object, too, very decidedly to the vulgarity of such a phrase as "I put in my oar" (meaning, "I joined in the conversation"), when proceeding from the mouth of so well-bred a personage as Miss Isabella Linwood. These are, certainly, most remarkable inadvertences.

As the author of many *books*—of several absolutely bound volumes in the ordinary "novel" form of auld lang

syne, Miss Sedgwick has a certain adventitious hold upon the attention of the public, a species of tenure that has nothing to do with literature proper—a very decided advantage, in short, over her more modern rivals whom fashion and the growing influence *of the want* of an international copyright law have condemned to the external insignificance of the yellow-backed pamphleteering.

We must, permit, however, neither this advantage nor the more obvious one of her having been one of our *pioneers*, to bias the critical judgment as it makes estimate of her abilities in comparison with those of her *present* contemporaries. She has neither the vigor of Mrs. Stephens nor the vivacious grace of Miss Chubbuck, nor the pure style of Mrs. Embury, nor the classic imagination of Mrs. Child, nor the naturalness of Mrs. Annan, nor the thoughtful and suggestive originality of Miss Fuller; but in many of the qualities mentioned she excels, and in no one of them is she particularly deficient. She is an author of marked talent, but by no means of such decided genius as would entitle her to that precedence among our female writers which, under the circumstances to which I have alluded, *seems* to be yielded her by the voice of the critic.

Strictly speaking, Miss Sedgwick is *not* one of the *literati* of New York City, but she passes here about half or rather more than half her time. Her home is Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Her family is one of the first in America. Her father, Theodore Sedgwick the elder, was an eminent jurist and descended from one of Cromwell's major-

generals. Many of her relatives have distinguished themselves in various ways.

She is about the medium height, perhaps a little below it. Her forehead is an unusually fine one; nose of a slightly Roman curve; eyes dark and piercing; mouth well formed and remarkably pleasant in its expression. The portrait in *Graham's Magazine* is by no means a likeness, and, although the hair is represented as curled (Miss Sedgwick at present wears a cap—at least most usually), gives her the air of being much older than she is.

Her manners are those of a high-bred woman, but her ordinary *manner* vacillates, in a singular way, between cordiality and a reserve amounting to *hauteur*.

LEWIS GAYLORD CLARK.

Mr. CLARK is known principally as the twin brother of the late *Willis* Gaylord Clark, the poet, of Philadelphia, with whom he has often been confounded from similarity both of person and of name. He is known, also, within a more limited circle, as one of the editors of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, and it is in this latter capacity that I must be considered as placing him among literary people. He writes little himself, the editorial scraps which usually appear in fine type at the end of the *Knickerbocker* being the joint composition of a great variety of gentlemen (most of them possessing shrewdness and talent) connected with diverse journals about the city of New York.

It is only in some such manner, as might be supposed, that so amusing and so heterogeneous a medley of chit-chat could be put together. Were a little more pains taken in elevating the *tone* of this "Editor's Table" (which its best friends are forced to admit is at present a little Boweryish), I should have no hesitation in commending it in general as a very creditable and very entertaining specimen of what may be termed easy writing and hard reading.

It is not, of course, to be understood from any thing I have here said, that Mr. Clark does not occasionally contribute editorial matter to the magazine. His compositions, however, are far from numerous, and are always to be distinguished by their style, which is more "easily to be imagined than described." It has its merit, beyond doubt, but I shall not undertake to say that either "vigor," "force," or "impressiveness" is the precise term by which that merit should be designated. Mr. Clark once did me the honor to review my poems, and—I forgive him.

The *Knickerbocker* has been long established, and seems to have in it some important elements of success. Its title, for a merely local one, is unquestionably good. Its contributors have usually been men of eminence. Washington Irving was at one period regularly engaged. Paulding, Bryant, Neal, and several others of nearly equal note have also at various times furnished articles, although none of these gentlemen, I believe, continue their com-

munications. In general, the contributed matter has been praiseworthy; the printing, paper, and so forth, have been excellent, and there certainly has been no lack of exertion in the way of what is termed "putting the work before the eye of the public"; still some incomprehensible *incubus* has seemed always to sit heavily upon it, and it has never succeeded in attaining *position* among intelligent or educated readers. On account of the manner in which it is necessarily edited, the work is deficient in that absolutely indispensable element, *individuality*. As the editor has no precise character, the magazine, as a matter of course, can have none. When I say "no precise character," I mean that Mr. C., as a literary man, has about him no determinateness, no distinctiveness, no saliency of point;—an apple, in fact, or a pumpkin, has more angles. He is as smooth as oil or a sermon from Dr. Hawks; he is noticeable for nothing in the world except for the markedness by which he is noticeable for nothing.

What is the precise circulation of the *Knickerbocker* at present I am unable to say; it has been variously stated at from eight to eighteen hundred subscribers. The former estimate is no doubt too low, and the latter, I presume, is far too high. There are, perhaps, some fifteen hundred copies printed.

At the period of his brother's decease, Mr. Lewis G. Clark bore to him a striking resemblance, but within the last year or two there has been much alteration in the person of the editor of the *Knickerbocker*. He is now, per-

haps, forty-two or three, but still good-looking. His forehead is, phrenologically, bad—round and what is termed "bullety." The mouth, however, is much better, although the smile is too constant and lacks expression; the teeth are white and regular. His hair and whiskers are dark, the latter meeting voluminously beneath the chin. In height Mr. C. is about five feet ten or eleven, and in the street might be regarded as quite a "personable man"; in society I have never had the pleasure of meeting him. He is married, I believe.

ANNE C. LYNCH.

Miss ANNE CHARLOTTE LYNCH has written little;—her compositions are even too few to be collected in volume form. Her prose has been, for the most part, anonymous—critical papers in *The New York Mirror* and elsewhere, with unacknowledged contributions to the annuals, especially *The Gift*, and *The Diadem*, both of Philadelphia. Her "Diary of a Recluse," published in the former work, is, perhaps, the best specimen of her prose manner and ability. I remember, also a fair *critique* on Fanny Kemble's poems;—this appeared in *The Democratic Review*.

In poetry, however, she has done better, and given evidence of at least unusual talent. Some of her compositions in this way are of merit, and one or two of excellence. In the former class I place her "Bones in the

Desert," published in *The Opal* for 1846, her "Farewell to Ole Bull," first printed in *The Tribune*, and one or two of her sonnets—not forgetting some graceful and touching lines on the death of Mrs. Willis. In the latter class I place two noble poems, "The Ideal" and "The Ideal Found." These should be considered as one, for each is by itself imperfect. In modulation and vigor of rhythm, in dignity and elevation of sentiment, in metaphorical appositeness and accuracy, and in energy of expression, I really do not know where to point out any thing American much superior to them. Their ideality is not so manifest as their passion, but I think it an unusual indication of taste in Miss Lynch, or (more strictly) of an intuitive sense of poetry's true nature, that this passion is just sufficiently subdued to lie within the compass of the poetic art, within the limits of the beautiful. A step farther and it might have passed them. *Mere* passion, however exciting, prosaically excites; it is in its very essence homely, and delights in homeliness; but the *triumph over* passion, as so finely depicted in the two poems mentioned, is one of the purest and most idealizing manifestations of moral beauty.

In character Miss Lynch is enthusiastic, chivalric, self-sacrificing, "equal to any fate," capable of even martyrdom in whatever should seem to her a holy cause—a most exemplary daughter. She has her hobbies, however, (of which a very indefinite idea of "duty" is one,) and is, of course, readily imposed upon by any artful person who

perceives and takes advantage of this most amiable failing.

In person she is rather above the usual height, somewhat slender, with dark hair and eyes—the whole countenance at times full of intelligent expression. Her demeanor is dignified, graceful, and noticeable for repose. She goes much into literary society.

CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN.

Mr. CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN has been long known to the public as an author. He commenced his literary career (as is usually the case in America) by writing for the newspapers—for *The New York American* especially, in the editorial conduct of which he became in some manner associated, at a very early age, with Mr. Charles King. His first *book*, I believe was a collection (entitled "A Winter in the West") of letters published in *The American* during a tour made by their author through the "far West." This work appeared in 1834, went through several editions, was reprinted in London, was very popular, and deserved its popularity. It conveys the *natural* enthusiasm of a true *idealist*, in the proper phrenological sense, of one sensitively alive to beauty in every development. Its scenic descriptions are vivid, because fresh, genuine, unforced. There is nothing of the cant of the tourist for the sake not of nature but of *tourism*. The author writes *what* he feels, and, clearly, *because* he feels

it. The style, as well as that of all Mr. Hoffman's books, is easy, free from superfluities, and although abundant in *broad* phrases, still singularly refined, gentlemanly. This ability to speak boldly without blackguardism, to use the tools of the rabble when necessary without soiling or roughening the hands with their employment, is a rare and unerring test of the natural in contradistinction from the artificial aristocrat.

Mr. H.'s next work was "Wild Scenes in the Forest and Prairie," very similar to the preceding, but more diversified with anecdote and interspersed with poetry. "Greyslaer" followed, a romance based on the well-known murder of Sharp, the Solicitor-General of Kentucky, by Beauchampe. W. Gilmore Simms (who has far more power, more passion, more movement, more skill than Mr. Hoffman) has treated the same subject more effectively in his novel "Beauchampe"; but the fact is that both gentlemen have positively failed, as might have been expected. That both books are interesting is no merit either of Mr. H. or of Mr. S. The real events were more impressive than are the fictitious ones. The *facts* of this remarkable tragedy, as arranged by actual circumstance, would put to shame the skill of the most consummate artist. Nothing was left to the novelist but the amplification of *character*, and at this point neither the author of "Greyslaer" nor of "Beauchampe" is especially *au fait*. The incidents might be better woven into a tragedy.

In the way of poetry, Mr. Hoffman has also written a

good deal. "The Vigil of Faith and other Poems" is the title of a volume published several years ago. The subject of the leading poem is happy — whether originally conceived by Mr. H. or based on an actual superstition, I cannot say. Two Indian chiefs are rivals in love. The accepted lover is about to be made happy, when his betrothed is murdered by the discarded suiter. The revenge taken is the careful *preservation* of the life of the assassin, under the idea that the meeting the maiden in another world is the point most desired by both the survivors. The incidents interwoven are picturesque, and there are many quotable passages; the descriptive portions are particularly good; but the author has erred, first, in narrating the story in the first person, and secondly, in putting into the mouth of the narrator language and sentiments above the nature of an Indian. I say that the narration should not have been in the first person, because, although an Indian may and does fully experience a thousand delicate shades of sentiment (the whole idea of the story is essentially sentimental), still he has, clearly, no capacity for their various *expression*. Mr. Hoffman's hero is made to discourse very much after the manner of Rousseau. Nevertheless, "The Vigil of Faith" is, upon the whole, one of our most meritorious poems. The shorter pieces in the collection have been more popular; one or two of the *songs* particularly so—"Sparkling and Bright," for example, which is admirably adapted to song purposes, and is full of lyric feelings. It cannot be denied,

however, that, in general, the whole tone, air, and spirit of Mr. Hoffman's fugitive compositions are echoes of Moore. At times the very words and figures of the "British Anacreon" are unconsciously adopted. Neither can there be any doubt that this obvious similarity, if not positive imitation, is the source of the commendation bestowed upon our poet by *The Dublin University Magazine*, which declares him "the best song writer in America," and does him also the honor to intimate its opinion that "he is a better fellow than the whole Yankee crew" of us taken together—after which there is very little to be said.

Whatever may be the merits of Mr. Hoffman as a poet, it may be easily seen that these merits have been put in the worst possible light by the indiscriminate and lavish approbation bestowed on them by Dr. Griswold in his "Poets and Poetry of America." The editor can find *no* blemish in Mr. H., agrees with every thing and copies every thing said in his praise—worse than all, gives him more space in the book than any two, or perhaps three, of our poets combined. All this is as much an insult to Mr. Hoffman as to the public, and has done the former irreparable injury—how or why, it is of course unnecessary to say. "Heaven save us from our friends!"

Mr. Hoffman was the original editor of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, and gave it while under his control a tone and character, the weight of which may be best estimated by the consideration that the work thence received

an impetus which has sufficed to bear it on alive, although tottering, month after month, through even that dense region of unmitigated and unmitigable fog—that dreary realm of outer darkness, of utter and inconceivable dunderheadism, over which has so long ruled King Log the Second, in the august person of one Lewis Gaylord Clark. Mr. Hoffman subsequently owned and edited *The American Monthly Magazine*, one of the best journals we have ever had. He also for one year conducted *The New York Mirror*, and has always been a very constant contributor to the periodicals of the day.

He is the brother of Ogden Hoffman. Their father, whose family came to New York from Holland before the time of Peter Stuyvesant, was often brought into connexion or rivalry with such men as Pinckney, Hamilton, and Burr.

The character of no man is more universally esteemed and admired than that of the subject of this memoir. He has a host of friends, and it is quite impossible that he should have an enemy in the world. He is chivalric to a fault, enthusiastic, frank without discourtesy, an ardent admirer of the beautiful, a gentleman of *the best* school—a gentleman by birth, by education, and by instinct. His manners are graceful and winning in the extreme—quiet, affable, and dignified, yet cordial and *dégages*. He converses much, earnestly, accurately, and well. In person he is remarkably handsome. He is about five feet ten in height, somewhat stoutly made. His countenance is a

noble one—a full index of the character. The features are somewhat massive but regular. The eyes are blue, or light gray, and full of fire; the mouth finely formed, although the lips have a slight expression of voluptuousness; the forehead, to my surprise although high, gives no indication, in the region of the temples, of that ideality (or love of the beautiful) which is the distinguishing trait of his moral nature. The hair curls, and is of a dark brown, interspersed with gray. He wears full whiskers. Is about forty years of age. Unmarried.

MARY E. HEWITT.

I am not aware that Mrs. HEWITT has written any prose; but her poems have been many, and occasionally excellent. A collection of them was published, in an exquisitely tasteful form, by Ticknor & Co., of Boston. The leading piece, entitled "Songs of our Land," although the longest, was by no means the most meritorious. In general, these compositions evince poetic fervor, classicism, and keen appreciation both of moral and physical beauty. No one of them, perhaps, can be judiciously commended as a whole; but no one of them is without merit, and there are several which would do credit to any poet in the land. Still, even these latter are particularly rather than generally commendable. They lack unity, totality—ultimate effect, but abound in forcible passages. For example:

Shall I portray thee in thy glorious seeming,
Thou that the pharos of my darkness art? . . .

Like the blue lotos on its own clear river
Lie thy soft eyes, beloved, upon my soul. . . .

And there the slave, a slave no more,
Hung reverent up the chain he wore. . . .

Here 'mid your wild and dark defile
O'erawed and wonder-whelmed I stand,
And ask—"Is this the fearful vale
That opens on the shadowy land?"

Oh friends! we would be treasured still,
Though Time's cold hand should cast
His misty veil, in after-years,
Over the idol Past,
Yet send to us some offering thought
O'er Memory's ocean wide,
Pure as the Hindoo's votive lamp
On Ganga's sacred tide.

Mrs. Hewitt has warm partialities for the sea and all that concerns it. Many of her best poems turn upon sea adventures or have reference to a maritime life. Some portions of her "God Bless the Mariner," are *naïve* and picturesque: *e. g.*—

God bless the happy mariner!
A homely garb wears he;
And he goeth *with a rolling gait,*
Like a ship before the sea.

He hath piped the loud "Ay, ay, sir!"
O'er the voices of the main,
Till his deep tones have the hoarseness
Of the rising hurricane.

But oh, a spirit looketh
From out his clear blue eye,
With a truthful childlike earnestness,
Like an angel from the sky.

A venturous life the sailor leads
Between the sky and sea,
But, when the hour of dread is past,
A merrier who than he?

The tone of some quatrains entitled "Alone," differs materially from that usual with Mrs. Hewitt. The idea is happy and well managed.

Mrs. Hewitt's sonnets are, upon the whole, her most praiseworthy compositions. One entitled "Hercules and Omphale" is noticeable for the vigor of its rhythm.

Reclined, enervate, on the couch of ease,
No more he pants for deeds of high emprize;
For Pleasure holds in soft voluptuous ties
Enthralled, great Jove-descended Hercules.
The hand that bound the Erymanthean boar,
Hesperia's dragon slew with bold intent,
That from his quivering side in triumph rent
The skin the Cleonæan lion wore,
Holds forth the goblet—while the Lydian queen,
Robed like a nymph, her brow enwreathed with vine,
Lifts high the amphora brimmed with rosy wine,
And pours the draught the crownéd cup within.
And thus the soul, abased to sensual sway,
Its worth forsakes—its might forgoes for aye.

The unusual force of the line italicized, will be observed. This force arises, first, from the directness, or colloquialism without vulgarity, of its expression—(the relative pronoun "which" is very happily omitted between "skin" and "the");—and, secondly, to the musical repetition of the vowel in "Cl*e*onæan," together with the alliterative termination in "Cleonæ*an*" and "li*on*." The effect, also, is much aided by the sonorous conclusion "wore."

Another and better instance of fine versification occurs in "Forgotten Heroes."

> And the peasant mother at her door,
> To the babe that climbed her knee,
> Sang aloud the land's heroic songs—
> *Sang of Thermopylæ—*
> *Sang of Mycale—of Marathon—*
> Of proud Platæa's day—
> Till the wakened hills from peak to peak
> Echoed the glorious lay.
> Oh, godlike name!—oh, godlike deed!
> *Song-borne afar on every breeze,*
> Ye are sounds to thrill like a battle shout,
> Leonidas! Miltiades!

The general intention here is a line of four iambuses alternating with a line of three; but, less through rhythmical skill than a musical ear, the poetess has been led into some exceedingly happy variations of the theme. For example, in place of the ordinary iambus as the first foot of the first, of the second, and of the third line, a bastard iambus has been employed. These lines are thus scanned:

> And the peas | ant moth | er at | her door |
> 4 4 2 2 2
> To the babe | that climbed | her knee |
> 4 4 2 2
> Sang aloud | the land's | hero | ic songs |
> 4 4 2 2 2

The fourth line,

> Sang of | Thermo | pylæ,
> 2 2 2

is well varied by a trochee, instead of an iambus, in the first foot; and the variation expresses forcibly the enthusiasm excited by the topic of the supposed songs,

"Thermopylæ." The fifth line is scanned as the three first. The sixth is the general intention, and consists simply of iambuses. The seventh is like the three first and the fifth. The eighth is like the fourth; and here again the opening trochee is admirably adapted to the *movement* of the topic. The ninth is the general intention, and is formed of four iambuses. The tenth is an alternating line and yet has four iambuses, instead of the usual three; as has also the final line—an alternating one, too. A fuller volume is in this manner given to the close of the subject; and this volume is fully in keeping with the rising enthusiasm. The last line but one has *two* bastard iambuses, thus:

Ye are sounds | to thrill | like a bat | tle shout |.
4 4 2 4 4 2

Upon the whole, it may be said that the most skilful versifier could not have written lines better suited to the purposes of the poet. The errors of "Alone," however, and of Mrs. Hewitt's poems generally, show that we must regard the beauties pointed out above, merely in the light to which I have already alluded—that is to say, as occasional happiness to which the poetess is led by a musical ear.

I should be doing this lady injustice were I not to mention that, at times, she rises into a higher and purer region of poetry than might be supposed, or inferred, from any of the passages which I have hitherto quoted. The conclusion of her "Ocean Tide to the Rivulet" puts me in mind of the rich spirit of Horne's noble epic, "Orion."

Sadly the flowers their faded petals close
Where on thy banks they languidly repose,
  Waiting in vain to hear thee onward press;
And pale Narcissus by thy margin side
Hath lingered for thy coming, drooped and died,
  Pining for thee amid the loneliness.

Hasten, beloved!—*here! 'neath the o'erhanging rock!*
Hark! from the deep, my anxious hope to mock,
  They call me back unto my parent main,
Brighter than Thetis thou—and *ah, more fleet!*
I hear the rushing of thy fair white feet!
  Joy! joy!—my breast receives its own again!

The personifications here are well managed. The "Here!—'neath the o'erhanging rock!" has the high merit of being truthfully, by which I mean *naturally*, expressed, and imparts exceeding vigor to the whole stanza. The idea of the ebb-tide, conveyed in the second line italicized, is one of the happiest imaginable; and too much praise can scarcely be bestowed on the "rushing" of the "fair white feet." The passage altogether is full of fancy, earnestness, and the truest poetic strength. Mrs. Hewitt has given many such *indications* of a fire which, with more earnest endeavor, might be readily fanned into flame.

In character, she is sincere, fervent, benevolent—sensitive to praise and to blame; in temperament melancholy; in manner subdued; converses earnestly yet quietly. In person she is tall and slender, with black hair and full gray eyes; complexion dark; general expression of the countenance singularly interesting and agreeable.

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